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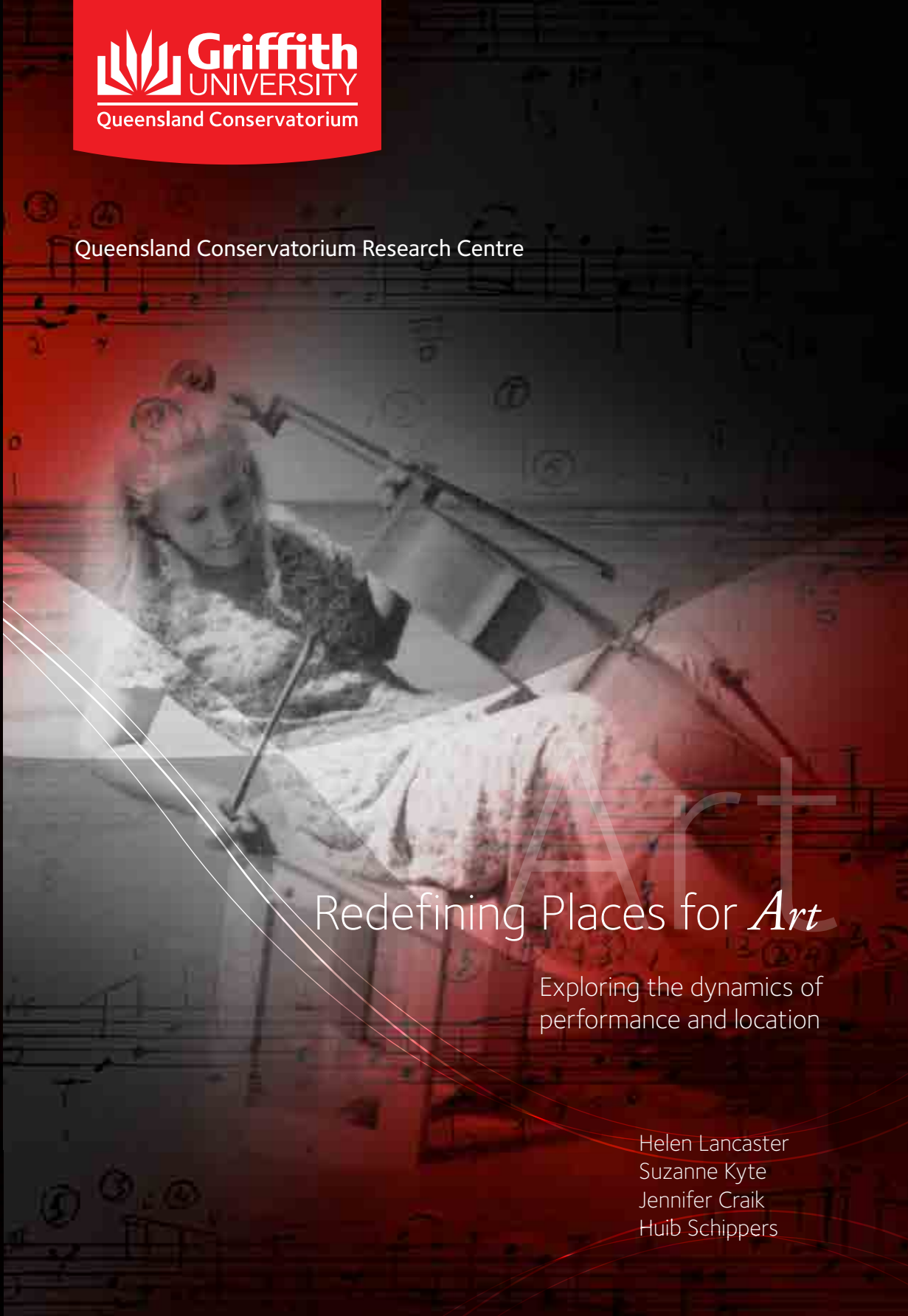

Redefining Places for *Art*

Exploring the dynamics of performance and location

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Research team

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Chris Bowen, MBA (Arts Queensland) is Director of Dance and Music at Arts Queensland. During his earlier career, he was executive manager of a number of iconic places for art in Queensland: the multicultural centre BEMAC, the Brisbane Powerhouse and the Judith Wright Centre of Contemporary Arts.

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The research team would like to thank Janet Chaseling for her contribution to the statistical analysis, Madonna Townsley for her assistance from Arts Queensland, Brydie-Leigh Bartleet for her invaluable preparatory work in 2005-2007, Kate Brennan and John Drummond for their feedback on the preliminary findings of the report, Catherine Grant for her thorough and insightful suggestions for editing this report, and all those who generously provided their experiences and opinions during the course of this study.

Redefining Places for *Art*

Exploring the dynamics of performance and location

An examination of the changing role and concept of place in Queensland's performing arts conducted by Queensland Conservatorium Research Centre (Griffith University), funded by the Australian Research Council and realised in partnership with the Australia Council for the Arts, Arts Queensland and the University of Canberra.

Executive summary

Redefining Places for Art was conceived in collaboration with Arts Queensland and the Australia Council for the Arts. The project was based on a strong impression that the relationship between place and performance is shifting substantially, and that organisers and producers of new work are increasingly exploring alternative venues to conventional theatres and concert halls. While formats and venues for performance inherited from nineteenth century European models still shape the Australian cultural and funding landscape, new forces are challenging assumptions about the formats, venues and audiences for the performing arts. These forces have become too prominent to be ignored.

The project (funded as a Linkage project by the Australian Research Council from 2008-2010) set out to investigate whether this development indeed reflects a significant change in the cultural realities of performance culture in Queensland. In addition to examining the sparsely available relevant statistical data, the project focused on identifying key artistic drivers behind this development from the perspective of artists and managers, and to glean audience perspectives on the relationship between live performance and place.

Seven clusters of arts providers were identified as the basis for this study: major urban and regional arts venues; flagship companies; major festivals; small-to-medium Brisbane-based organisations; small-to-medium regional organisations; community-focused festivals; and emerging, experimental & online events. For each, an in-depth case study was chosen to illustrate the most striking characteristics of the cluster. Extensive interviews were conducted with art producers and organisations, which led to a wealth of ideas and insights.

Meanwhile, statistical data were analysed from both the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the relevant organisations within each cluster (primarily annual reports and audience surveys) to gain greater insight into the scope and drivers of change. This led to some new and unexpected correlations, but much more strongly to the realisation that these important developments in audience behaviour are barely reflected in current systems of data gathering. To compensate for this dearth in understanding key impacting factors on audience behaviour, focus groups were organised across Queensland to include the voices of end-users.

This combined exercise has led to a rich and varied picture of an arts scene in constant movement, where artistic visions interact with practical possibilities and impossibilities in both expected and unexpected ways. The insights evolving from this exercise generate a framework for understanding the drivers for flexible relationships between performance and place, from wholly static to highly fluid. These extremes do not represent value judgments; they rather create insight into choices made — as well as opportunities discarded — across the performing arts in Queensland. Many of these principles are likely to apply beyond state boundaries, or even internationally.

In that way, this report provides an instrument for creators, administrators, marketing professionals, funding bodies and policy makers to make better informed decisions in providing quality experiences to a wide range of audiences. It is projected that the insights gained from this project will yield practical strategies to optimise reach for the performing arts in Australia. Ultimately, the framework emanating from this research can be used across Australia for assessing arts policies and funding to ensure the most appropriate support for facilitating a rich and diverse future for the performing arts in this country.

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Deep Blue performing at La Boîte is by Fiona Cullen

Foreword

by Kate Brennan, CEO Federation Square, Melbourne

This project commences with a simple observation. People (audiences, consumers, communities — they are called many things) are experiencing culture in so many more and different formats and settings than has been the case in the last fifty years. *Redefining Places for Art* explores the multi-variant circumstances of arts delivery in Queensland, and the enormous diversity in perspectives of organisers, creators, audiences and participants, particularly in the ways they interface with the arts experience.

Such conversations provide a rare opportunity to examine the present reality of predominantly mainstream cultural practice, and to chart courses for the future. It is even rarer that this investigation looks beyond the idea of location, space and venue to broader notions of 'place'. That it has the potential to inform individual and organisational thinking about practical ways of breaking from the constraints of the past and journeying along the continuum of 'good, better and best' public engagement could even be a breakthrough.

Several interesting themes have emerged. One has obviously been the nature of the existing soft and hard infrastructure for the arts in Queensland, its strengths and weaknesses, particularly in respect of rapidly changing social and community planning, expectations and modes of participation. What is clear from this discussion is that as we leave the nineteenth century behind (!) and attempt within existing structures to respond to higher levels of community demand, technology, and issues of sustainability, the cultural sector runs the risk of not being ready for the future. It must have on the agenda greater investment in flexible approaches to buildings, touring, broadcasting and other community infrastructure.

This is relevant not just for greater public participation but also for the creativity and wellbeing of artists. As Robyn Archer argued during her opening address to *Fluidity*, the Annual Conference of the International Society for Performing Arts in New York in 2007:

> While there is no shortage of artists making work in familiar forms (theatre, opera, concert platform music, ballet, drama and literature, etc.) just as they were one hundred years ago, there is clear evidence of [...] a burgeoning wave of artists who make their art in a more fluid form [...] These artists need us to try not to squeeze them into our twentieth century boxes (whether they be literally venues or metaphorically funding mechanisms, subscription series or philosophies of art) but to respond to new ways and forms in the arts and to allow the form of our support to follow the function of their work.

Another parallel can be drawn with the concept (promoted by Brecht and others) of 'the fourth wall' in theatre-based performances. It would seem — and the research supports — that when artists, companies and venues have the predisposition, regardless of the motivation, to remove the practical, intellectual and emotional barriers between themselves and those with whom they are communicating or collaborating, the shared and reciprocal experience is more likely to be exciting, transformative, and building loyalty and vigour. The idea of 'breaking the fourth wall' which involves characters directly addressing and acknowledging an audience which is made aware that it is witnessing fiction, may well be a metaphor for a changing perspective in arts delivery: the need to acknowledge the audience or participant as a very real and willing part of the whole process of the arts experience.

In Brecht's epic theatre, as the fourth wall is removed, the audience faces the action, makes decisions and has the opportunity to be aroused to action. This opportunity is reflected across the various case studies that form the core of this project, strikingly both in its inclusion and absence.

Much of this project revolves around the idea of 'place' and venues: spaces for creating artistic work, urban and regional locations, and the public realm have all been investigated as variables in the spectrum of public engagement. However, there is a case for a robust discussion of 'place' beyond these subsets. The international discourse and practice around 'placemaking' puts community activity involving all kinds of people from across a specific constituency as the driving force in creating a vision for a place, at which point planners and designers can help the community turn the vision into a reality. Such practice is familiar to artists and organisations experienced in community and cultural development. It is less familiar — and there is less capacity to explore and deliver — in those organisations whose community oriented behaviours are mostly the result of market or financially driven 'audience development' or 'access' initiatives.

The value in this consideration of place is not so much in defining what sorts of places work best for what sort of art and art/audience interface, but in re-enforcing the viscerality and connectedness inherent in really rewarding arts experiences. In this context, creating or supporting great places for art is indistinguishable from understanding the way in which people want to be involved and have some control over the experience.

The challenges inherent in this are strongly present throughout this report, across the range from 'flagship' to 'alternative' arts, and the voices of the audience and participants. Its impact will depend on the extent to which the behaviours and delivery modes associated with the hypothesised spectrum of static to flexible public engagement can convincingly be argued as a critical component of new and emerging policy frameworks, as the capacities required of board members and managers, and most importantly as new freedoms for artists and participants.

Kate Brennan is CEO of Federation Square, Melbourne. She was invited to participate as an external expert in a two-day working conference with researchers and partner organisations to consolidate the findings of 'Redefining Places for Art'. This foreword represent her reflections on the project from the perspective of extensive industry experience and a base of cultural and community contact derived from roles across community based organisations, local government, major venues, peak industry associations, funding bodies, and now a major community and cultural precinct.

SECTION 1 Background, rationale and approach

Introduction

> Brisbane, July 2003. As part of the Queensland Music Festival, a Belgian Spiegeltent has been erected in the Cultural Forecourt, less than 250 metres from the more conventional performance venues of the Queensland Performing Arts Centre and Queensland Conservatorium. The program features contemporary compositions, mostly for solo instruments. At the best of times and places, most conventional venues would struggle to attract an audience of over fifty for such events. Several hundred patrons attend this event, drawn by the occasion, the unusual setting, and perhaps the promise of Belgian beer.

Over the past few decades, while many established venues and companies have been deploring a lack of engagement with the 'elite end' of the performing arts, particularly by audiences aged below fifty, a vibrant alternative circuit of performance venues seems to have sprung up. In Australia, this is evidenced by the rise in number of and attendance at outdoor festivals, the refurbishment of industrial spaces to accommodate performances of diverse kinds, increased staging of location-based performances, and of course the rise of online participation in (and consumption of) the performing arts. Often, these do not only constitute a physical shift, but also one of approach, allowing audiences to play a more active role in curating their individual experience of the performing arts.

In parallel, many people across Australia are curating their own experiences of the arts within their communities, engaging in the "vibrant and widespread phenomenon" that is community arts (cf. Bartleet et al, 2009, p.137). Being anchored within local communities, such activities often have a strong relationship to place. The concept of place is particularly meaningful in a country like Australia, where the traditional custodians of the land have over 40,000 years of culture and performance founded on the significance of place. The centrality of place to Aboriginal identity lies on many levels, through expression of, attachment to, and responsibility for one's region of origin, to sites of historical significance, and to the very conception of site itself (Dunbar-Hall & Gibson, 2004, p.70).

There seems to be some statistical evidence to support perceptions of shifting trends. While the Australian Bureau for Statistics is not yet gathering targeted data to measure the relationship between performance and place, Queensland attendance numbers for alternative spaces, particularly festivals, show convincing growth over the past decade. Over the same period, the more conventional venues report stable or variable numbers in their specific segment of the population, set against substantial growth of the state population at large. Among the artforms presented in such venues, only two have attracted a substantial increase in audience: popular music and musicals, the latter mostly being presented in large government-funded venues like the Queensland Performing Arts Centre. It is the purpose of this project to better understand the nature, scope and drivers of this phenomenon related to live performance. While it is of increasing importance, online access to the performing arts (for example, by downloading music or videos) is beyond the scope of this research.

Historical background

Since colonial times, Queensland has benefited from state and local government support for the provision of cultural facilities, venues and events. A succession of enthusiastic amateurs establishing theatre, music and dance organisations and events, has made almost inevitable an historical and ongoing commitment by government and community to the establishment of a range of cultural infrastructure, inherited and new.

One of the challenges for culture in Queensland has been the sheer size of the state (1.72 million square kilometres), the dispersed nature of the population (4.49 million; or less than 1% of the total population of the European Union (EU) spread over 39% of the total EU surface of 4.42 million square kilometres), and its pattern of regional hubs serviced by larger towns or cities like Townsville, Cairns, Mt Isa, Longreach, Mackay, Rockhampton, Charleville and Birdsville. In contrast to other Australian states where cultural activity has radiated out from state capitals, over time these places have acted as mini-centres of cultural activity to differing degrees. For this reason, the position of Brisbane as a natural cultural centre has been sometimes contested, and competition between state and local or regional organisations has occasionally been fierce.

The political culture of Queensland has also played a significant role. Historically, Queensland was a relatively radical state with independently-minded farmers, rural workers, and migrant groups from Italy fanning agrarian politics. This resulted in the world's first majority Labor government and eventually led to the election of the country's first and only communist Member of Parliament. But in the 1950s, the fortunes of the left and progressive side of politics evaporated and "the seemingly invincible 'natural' government party of Queensland" imploded (Fitzgerald & Thornton, 1989, p.175), leaving conservative governments to reign from 1957 until 1989. However, for these governments, culture remained an important aspect of demonstrating political legitimacy and social maturity.

The first buildings for performance were erected in Brisbane before the First World War: the School of Arts was established in 1849 and the Brisbane Philharmonic Society in 1858, while numerous cultural venues (Theatre Royal, Her Majesty's Opera House, Brisbane Exhibition Building, Empire Theatre, Albert Hall, and outdoor spaces, the Cremorne Theatre and Palace Gardens) appeared between the 1880s and World War 1. Whilst most early infrastructure was concentrated in Brisbane, the vast distances between regional cities across the state, and competition between levels of government, were to dictate that each place would demand its own facilities over time. Between the wars, other cultural initiatives included the formation of the Brisbane Repertory Theatre Company (in 1925, becoming La Boîte in 1967), the Twelfth Night Theatre in 1936, and to the Ballet Theatre of Queensland in 1937. During World War Two, several significant government supported initiatives included the Queensland State String Quartet from 1944, and the Brisbane City Council public concert programs from 1941, both of which had a strong presence in the Brisbane City Hall opened in 1930. New post-war cultural organisations included the Queensland Symphony Orchestra in 1947, Brisbane Opera Company in 1948 (which did not have a long life, and was not connected to the later formation of the Queensland Opera Company as an offshoot of the Queensland Arts Council in 1970), and the Queensland Conservatorium of Music in 1957. Queensland's first fully professional ballet company, Queensland Ballet, was formed in 1960 as a private initiative of Charles Lisner, eventually becoming state funded in 1968.

A rapid growth of theatre companies around Australia after the Second World War spawned "a wide variety of theatre spaces, many of them either built or converted from other spaces" (Milne, 2004, p.188), and in Queensland this diversity extended beyond whether these were new or inherited spaces to where and how they came into being.
After the success of the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust's 1958 national tour of Summer of the Seventeenth Doll, Bruce Grant wrote an article in which he challenged whether the conventional proscenium stage was right for Australia: "If we get a dramatist with the same poetic vision for lonely heroism as the painter Sidney Nolan and novelist Patrick White, the stage will need more air" (quoted in Milne, 2004, p.188). With a subsequent growth in the number of theatre companies around the country, many new theatres were built, most of them conventional in style. Queensland did well out of the growth in new spaces, largely because

> the development-oriented government of Sir John Bjelke-Petersen would have been especially motivated to help develop regional arts centres … If the highly democratised 'community' (i.e. electorate) wanted a state company to tour the state, it had better provide decent facilities to enable it to do so. (Milne, p.195)

Consequently, there followed a new SGIO Theatre in 1969 (the name reflecting the building in which it was situated), the Twelfth Night Theatre in 1971, Mayne Hall at the University of Queensland in 1973 (which served as a major concert hall until it was repurposed as an art gallery after 2002), and various other metropolitan and regional theatres, one of the first of which was Cairns Civic Centre established in 1974. Despite this rush of new places for performance during this period, Brisbane's La Boîte theatre in Hale Street Milton was one of the few early venues which opted for a permanent in-the-round setting, in fact the first in Australia. The rest were proscenium theatre spaces, of debatable relevance to those new companies which had emerged in the late 1960s and 1970s in existing non-proscenium spaces. Furthermore, the Bjelke-Petersen government determination to provide these facilities was to some degree short-lived, as it was also responsible for the demolition of Her Majesty's Theatre (1983), and the Theatre Royal (1987). The SGIO Theatre (within the Suncorp Building, which still remains) was demolished more recently, in 2007.

Fuelling the growth of infrastructure, a number of cultural organisations were born at this time, including the Queensland Theatre Company (1969), Queensland Film Corporation (1978), Lyric Opera of Queensland as a replacement for the Queensland Opera Company (1981 - the first season was in 1982), Dance North (1985), and Rock'n'Roll Circus (1986, renamed Circa in 2004). This same period also saw the birth of cultural and community festivals, including Warana Festival in Brisbane (1961), the Country Music Muster at Gympie (1965), and Laura Dance Festival in Cape York (1980). The Queensland Folk Festival would first be held at Maleny in 1987, and later become the iconic Woodford Folk Festival.

The crowning glory of this period was the opening of the Queensland Performing Arts Complex (now Centre; QPAC) as part of the Queensland Cultural Centre in Brisbane in 1985, the most significant single investment in cultural infrastructure in Queensland's history. The QPAC complex includes the Concert Hall, the Cremorne Theatre, the Playhouse and the Lyric Theatre; all spaces that are leased by local cultural organisations, and considered the presenting 'home' of some. Adding an extra dimension to the allocation of these facilities is the fact that QPAC also leases the spaces to visiting productions. Funded by the state government, QPAC has remained the central priority of cultural funding since its establishment. In 1991, QPAC became the home of the first (and only) Brisbane Biennial International Festival of Music, which was eventually re-born in 1999 as the Queensland Biennial Festival of Music, extending the reach beyond the QPAC building on the South Bank and into places far beyond Brisbane. With an ever-evolving diversity of artistic activity requiring infrastructure, other cultural organisations and activities have increasingly argued for a greater share of government support, and for additional facilities as the incidence and range of artistic work has increased.

The accumulation of new places for performance continued through the eighties, some initiatives triggered by local communities determined to celebrate the Australian Bicentennial Year in 1988 with a piece of enduring infrastructure. Other places were built as independent facilities on university campuses, as private venues for commercial exploitation, or even built by theatre companies for their own use (Milne, 2004, p.188). Not all were new buildings. Those inherited, which included some resurrected from past lives, embrace restorations like that of the heritage-listed Empire Theatre in Toowoomba, originally built in 1911, rebuilt after being destroyed by fire in 1933, and finally restored to new life in 1997, with the adjacent Church (from 1877) added to the complex in 1998; and also recreations like the Tanks Arts Centre in Cairns: originally three concrete fuel tanks built for the Royal Australian Navy in 1944, and redeveloped as a community arts space in 1992. In Brisbane, a derelict power station on the river was given new life in 2000 as the Brisbane Powerhouse, a vibrant arts centre which benefited from further development in 2007. Not far away, in Fortitude Valley (Brisbane), a creative hub for contemporary artforms was established as the Judith Wright Centre of Contemporary Arts in 2001. Both offer places for performance which extend the imagination and the experience for both artists and audience, and each hosts companies in residence, such as Circa at the Judith Wright Centre and Topology at the Powerhouse.

In parallel with these developments in infrastructure, all levels of government have established or supported a number of other initiatives which have enabled the development of product for the new range of venues. These include the establishment of Just Us Theatre Ensemble (JUTE) in Cairns in 1992; the emergence of contemporary music ensembles such as Perihelion in 1988, Elision (which moved its base from Melbourne to the Brisbane in 1996 though the actual performance presence in Brisbane was not as great as their touring profile), Topology in 1997 and Clocked Out (formed in Melbourne in 1999, and relocated to Brisbane in 2003); and the establishment of Stylin'UP (2001), Tropic Sun, the 2high Festival and Straight Out Of Brisbane (SOOB) in 2002, and On Edge (2004). One of the more unusual pathways to establishment was travelled by Deep Blue, emerging in 2006 as the focus of a research project intending to explore new parameters for orchestral performance. Since then it has had some government funding for specific projects, but the company has also begun to show commercial potential, and with continuing success may well prove self-sustainable. In sum, there has been a significant increase in government support for venues and organisations amid restructuring of models of support and accountability measures with increased emphasis on value for money, cultural innovation and development, and the provision of new generation venues.

This illustrates how over the years, between the time when the first regional performance venues were established and the early years of this century, many 'civic', 'cultural' or 'arts' centres emerged in regional cities and towns around the state. As already noted, until the 1990s most of these new places for performance were orthodox in style, proscenium-arch venues built to conventional performance prescriptions, at variance with the many performance organisations which had developed during the late 1960s and 1970s, most of which had, until the advent of the new 'arts centre', adapted non-theatre spaces for their performances. Milne notes that theatre companies without homes "tended to hire the more flexible non-proscenium venues in the new arts centres" and questions whether this decision might have been driven by cost or aesthetics (2004, p.189). Herein lies the constant dilemma: with no place to call home, companies build work wherever possible, and if given a home place, they are bound by its limitations or extended by its possibilities. There are organisations in this study which might debate the ramifications of this quandary ad infinitum.

Over the past three decades, culture in Queensland has shifted from the periphery to the forefront of state and local government policy, as ideas about the role of government and role of culture in everyday life have changed and converged (see Craik 1993; 2007).

Accordingly, the proliferation of cultural initiatives and the amount of funding has increased dramatically, whilst a broad-brush government definition of culture and its place in Queensland's vibrant lifestyle has transformed the state and its disparate communities: "new ideas about culture, the role of government, public participation and equity have redrawn the terms of cultural policy. Most significant has been the expansion of the arts to include cultural development" (Craik, 1993, p.5).

The contemporary cultural vision now found at all levels of government — local, regional, state, national and international — is a strong commitment to cultural activity and development as a core responsibility of governments. Overviews of policies in many jurisdictions testify to this, including Australia (Bennett, 1991; Australia Council, 2010; Cultural Ministers Council, 2006, pp.40-44), New Zealand (Statistics New Zealand, 2003), Scotland (Ruiz, 2004), England (Arts Council of England, 2009), Canada (Duxbury, 2008), Pittsburgh (Kopczynski & Hager, 2003), New York City (Miringoff, Opdycke and Miringoff, 2002), and the counties of Sarasota and Manatee in the USA (Kopczynski & Hager, 2004).

Together these studies present a picture of a hive of cultural activity across the globe sponsored by governments at all levels, eagerly appropriated by diverse groups of cultural creators and practitioners, and consumed by audiences who show a healthy appetite for culture. This picture, however, also reveals consistent patterns of cultural consumption that continue to defy idealistic cultural advocates and policy initiators. Cultural consumers tend to be women aged over 45, better educated and better off, more likely to live in the city, and more likely to come from mainstream ethnic groups. Conversely, people who are young, poor, male, poorly educated, from minority ethnic groups and socially disadvantaged are less likely to be cultural consumers.

There is also evidence that cultural tastes are changing. 'Traditional' or so-called 'elite' artforms now compete with newer ones like festivals, 'popular' artforms including musicals, digital and online cultural products and performances, and community-based events and activities. Increasingly, a sense of localised identity and a sense of place and belonging are at the core of cultural activity which increasingly takes place outside sanctioned arts and cultural centres but in alternative kinds of venues. These trends pose challenges for governments as they commit to cultural development, diversity and engagement, on which Redefining Places for Art intends to shed some light.

In Queensland, the state government has instigated a series of energetic arts initiatives including the Queensland Arts and Cultural Sector Plan 2010-2013 (Arts Queensland 2009d), Artbeat: Regional Arts and Culture Strategy 2010-2014 (2008b), Creative Queensland. The Queensland Government Cultural Policy 2002 (2002b), Creative Government: Arts and Cultural Activity across the Queensland Government (2002a), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Policy 2009-2013 (2008), press play: Contemporary Music Strategy 2009-2012 (2008d), and 'Coming to a Place Near You': Touring Strategy for Performing Arts in Queensland 2009-2014 (2008b). Of particular relevance to this project, the Queensland Arts and Cultural Sector Plan 2010-2013 spells out the state government's commitment to "building the resilience and sustainability of the state's arts and cultural strategy" through the concept of establishing a "cultural ecology" that embraces the "diversity, interconnectedness and interdependence" of the arts and cultural community in order to "boost the state's cultural profile and strengthen our regional, national and global networks" (Anna Bligh, 'Premier's Foreword' in Arts Queensland, 2009d, p.6).

Central to the strategy is the recognition of

> a blurring of boundaries within the sector itself — between different mediums, commercial and not-for-profit activities, the established cultural infrastructure and independent artists and companies, and between audiences and artists. This view of the sector as a complex and interdependent 'ecosystem' is forging new thinking, new practices and new business models. (Arts Queensland, 2009d: p.12).

Five key aims are at the core of the sector strategy, namely creating great arts and culture; engaged audiences and cultural active communities; strong and diverse creative economy; creative spaces and places; and commitment to ongoing learning (Arts Queensland, 2009d, pp.14-15). In particular, Goal 4 reiterates the importance of developing new kinds of spaces and places for performance, including increasing "access to traditional and non-traditional public spaces and facilities" (p.17), integrating "arts and cultural spaces into non-traditional environments" (p.19), creating facilities, venues, spaces precincts and festivals that are accessible, flexible, sustainable, affordable, digitally compatible, integrated into local cultural planning, and catalysts for urban and regional renewal (p.19). In short:

> Demand driven investment in cultural infrastructure — built and digital — will ensure the state's creative spaces remain accessible, functional and lively places for artists and communities. (Arts Queensland 2009d, p.19)

The organisations in 'Coming to a Place Near You': Touring Strategy for Performing Arts in Queensland 2009-2014 are represented by case examples included in this study: the major performing arts organisations (Opera Queensland, Queensland Ballet, Queensland Symphony Orchestra and Queensland Theatre Company); small-to-medium (S2M) performing arts organisations; community festivals such as the Brisbane Festival, Queensland Music Festival, Laura Dance Festival and The Dreaming; venues such as QPAC and the Judith Wright Centre of Contemporary Arts; Indigenous cultural training, performance and events; and youth arts. A comprehensive program of benchmarked strategies, projects and initiatives monitor the implementation of this policy which aims to "stimulate a demand-driven performing arts touring culture in Queensland" (Arts Queensland, 2008b, p.3).
The success of these combined government policies in Queensland is evident in a proliferation of cultural organisations across artforms and across the state — all vying for a share of increasingly sparse funding as well as competing with new artforms such as festivals, community cultural events and experimental and emerging activities. As outgoing artistic director of Melbourne's Malthouse Theatre, Michael Kantor lamented on the difficulty of creating art:

> It's not just about more money for the arts, although that's part of it. It comes down to a fundamental shift in priorities to sport and major event obsession that is starving the day-to-day creative life of the city [...] I've got no problems with grand prix and footy spectaculars, but they take up considerable capital from a shrinking pie when we want to go out on a daily basis and engage culturally. (Kantor, cited in Gill, 2010)

Kantor's comment represents a sentiment expressed in many places, not just confined to Australia but reflective of changes in cultural policy, arts funding and the cultural spectrum internationally. Culture is increasingly about building a sense of community, cultural difference, and fitting cultural activities to develop and reflect a sense of place, and a cultural identity. In short, there has been a cultural shift from a focus on traditional and elite arts towards the burgeoning of culture that can be consumed and appreciated by everyday communities as part of community life and collective pride.

This has challenged nineteenth century models of culture and mechanisms of arts funding and support away from direct central government largesse and the building and maintenance of iconic cultural edifices (opera houses, cultural centres, and so on) towards the diversification of sources of support and supplementation by commercial activities and other forms of value adding. Motivated by limited resources, artists and arts organisations have made a concerted effort to supplement or replace government sources of funding with sponsorship and partnership arrangements as well as engaging in commercial activities (such as merchandising) and enlisting the incorporation of volunteers, community groups and 'ambassadors'. The need to unite a wider community in resourcing artistic activity underlines the importance of developing an understanding about culture at an early age. Thus there is an increasing priority to include arts curricula at a national level, and the second stage of the National Curriculum, due for implementation in 2012, includes the Arts. As has already been demonstrated by the impact of a strong music curriculum in Queensland schools, engaging young people in cultural activity in schools and youth productions beyond school offers a better chance of the next generations appreciating artistic endeavours and choosing to participate in or be supportive of cultural activity.

Rationale and approach of this project

These observations form a rich canvas on which predominantly mainstream artforms play with the relationship between place and performance to create a new artistic experience or engage the audience, existing or new, in ways that enhance their experience, often with a greater sense of agency on the part of the otherwise passive spectator. The underlying thought is that this development is potentially of great importance in ensuring and sustaining a vibrant performing arts scene in Australia, and will perhaps even drive policy and funding in decades to come.

For the sake of this project, the Queensland performing arts sector was divided into seven main clusters, each with specific characteristics: major urban and regional arts venues; flagship companies; major festivals; small-to-medium Brisbane-based organisations; small-to-medium regional organisations; community-focused festivals; and emerging, experimental and online events.

The research for the project consisted of six key elements across these clusters: a literature review of the key sources on performance and place; an in-depth case study of one organisation within each cluster; extensive interviews with creators and producers; a careful analysis of policy documents and reports; a statistical analysis of relevant Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) figures and other sources on audiences; and a series of focus group discussions with audience members. The following pages contain the initial findings from this exercise, organised in sections on ideas and concepts (place and meaning, place and change; place and access); findings from the clusters and case studies (including interviews and focus groups); and an analysis of statistical data and their relevance.

Space, place and meaning

The place in which performance occurs brings with it many levels of meaning: place may be "a space to which meaning has been ascribed" (Carter et al, 1993, p.xii), but performance may also ascribe meaning to a particular place. Performer Nicole Canham explains that "for me, a sense of place inspires thinking along two distinct lines — the physical/literal sense of place, and the intellectual, emotional and social notions of sense of place" (2009, p.1). Thus the concept of place is more than merely physical or geographical.

Chaney indicates the extent to which place might confine what is possible within: "Places are culturally formulated ways of imbuing environments with meaning, but rather than just being a form of engagement, as social space is, a place also constrains interpretation by pre-existing as representation" (1994, p.153). Performance places therefore have the potential not only to shape the terms of a production, but also influence response and consequent likelihood of success for a performance. As Miles and Adams describe it, "The role of art is to transform spaces into places, the public into people" (1989, p.4).

Place may therefore be political, inseparable from the conflictual and uneven social relations that structure specific societies at specific historical moments (Deutsche, 1996, p.xiv). Each place represents a tapestry woven from those historical and social elements (communities) which have shaped it over time. Spaces therefore become places "as they become
'time-thickened'" (Crang, 1998, p.102), and particular places might have "different meanings for different individuals or groups" (Clark, 1998, p.112). It would seem that the bond between place and community is constantly evolving in response to the imagination of those who influence or impact upon each such relationship. Just as museums might be mirrors of our cultural heritage, so do performance spaces also hold potential for reflecting the stories of those who inhabit the places in which they reside.

Whilst true for all artforms, this is particularly so for the performing arts, which build their work around (and in) places, some of them very specific. Nonetheless, as Drake suggests, "there is clearly nothing new about the contention that place can provide inspiration and a source of ideas for individual artists, designers, and musicians" (2003, p.1). In the performing arts the places that have traditionally cultivated artistic prestige have been located in cultural icons like concert halls, opera houses, and theatres, most of which have been built on nineteenth-century European models.

At great expense, and despite the fact that many of them struggle financially, we continue to build such edifices, and subsidise their operations, even though "building architecturally impressive performance spaces isn't cheap, and there is a tendency to be far too optimistic about costs, especially when public-funding politics drives the budget" (Russell, 2005, p.134). Grodach confirms this trend: "Because a prime characteristic of a flagship cultural project is its iconic quality, the buildings are typically designed to be big and flashy. However, large-scale facilities require a major annual investment toward building and maintenance and operations, which can deflect funding away from programming, education and outreach" (2008, p.510).

This predilection for iconic places for performance is relatively recent in history. Private houses "served as locations for performance both before and after the Restoration drama periods", and performances hosted in royal courts provided the foundation on which was developed state subsidisation of high-art performances, "largely to the benefit of the well-heeled — from aristocracy to meritocracy" (Evans, 2001, p.19). Thus developed the parallel existence of theatres for the upper classes alongside the pleasure gardens, fairs and cinemas which were "open to all who cared to pay the entrance money" (p.59).

By the time of the mid-Victorian period, the common ground was the music hall which attracted "a mixture of patrons who, in their own homes and occupations would not normally meet" (Best, in Evans, p.59). Because "what divided the audience along social class lines more than anything was the behaviour in music halls and theatres" (Weightman, 1992, p.49), there developed what Evans calls "the social and spatial divide … in the location and participation in public culture", which manifested in the provision of elite facilities "for pleasure and improvement" and the emergence of state "control and interference in popular pastimes and gatherings" (op. cit., p.59). To varying degrees, this divide, including barriers experienced among popular forms of performance, persists today, with studies confirming that attempts by venues to increase demand from non-users of elite arts facilities have largely been unsuccessful. Barriers to participation remain "deep-seated" (p.117).

There is an argument that some such barriers persist because of specific performance etiquette which alienates those unfamiliar with the established rituals of performance. Kingsbury describes, for example, the ritual of the solo piano performance by noting the isolation of the soloist from the audience, which "establishes the status of the performer far more unambiguously" than might any academic qualification. According to Kingsbury, the same isolation is a social one, eliminating the need for interaction with the audience, and further widening the chasm between performer and audience (1998, p.125). As Costantoura suggests, removing any sense of elitism may well make audiences tend more favourably towards the arts; but "make no mistake. This does not suggest in any way that Australians have a problem with an elite standard of performance. But they do have a problem with elitist attitudes" (2001, p.28).

Less formal performances spaces have the capacity to reduce, if not eliminate this gap. Whilst the proscenium performance space remains the most likely 'new' facility to be built, the range of available places for performance has expanded to include also the renovated and rejuvenated ones, associated with what Evans refers to as the "urban renaissance" revitalisation strategies to overcome barriers of access to cultural activities (2001, pp.260-61). Whilst this renaissance is largely associated with non-elitist spaces, it can also be related to the increase in foyer events which have the potential to change the expectations of elitist facilities.

Changing places and contexts

In several countries, there has been a concerted endeavour to replace, re-purpose and revitalise cultural infrastructure across the country. In Canada, for example, policy acknowledges and responds to a number of factors: ageing facilities; new demand for a diversity of multipurpose cultural spaces, including some for creation, preparation and storage; the instability brought about by lack of secure tenure; under-use of community facilities which fail to meet the needs of potential users; the imperative to maximise the productivity of public investment; and fragmented policy frameworks for funding cultural infrastructure (Duxbury, 2008; CECC, 2008f). As will become evident, the Canadian model is particularly relevant to the Queensland situation.

A significant shift in cultural policy has also occurred as traditional class divisions that have positioned art as the privilege of the elite have been challenged by a focus on cultural democracy — with its mantras of access and equity, audience development and community enrichment. This aligns with Bourdieu's theory that cultural capital is manifested in familiarity with cultural language and practice, and familiarity is possible only through education and participation (Bourdieu, 1984; cf. Swartz, 1997, p.189).

The reality of cultural and ethnic diversity is that minority groups in societies (like ethnic and indigenous groups) do not partake of mainstream cultural events unless they are of special relevance to their subculture, or they have been engaged in the preparation and presentation of the event. Without education and participation to build familiarity, any potential for audience development may therefore be limited.

There are a number of studies showing how investment in culture creates social and economic benefits. Jeannotte (2008), for example, summarises six models of how culture promotes social cohesion; social inclusion; social well-being and quality of life; cultural citizenship; cultural sustainability; and a creative economy. In order to realise such strategies, Duxbury identifies a three-tiered model of providing services and infrastructure that respond to the specific needs of a city (and its cultural identity), a district (matching the resident profile with the community of professional artists) and neighbourhood (addressing the priorities of residents, amateur artists and managing its cultural heritage). Significantly, this project involves negotiating multilevel governance as well as devising new funding models and new types of cultural infrastructure (2008, pp.79-80; CECC 2008d). Accordingly, Canada has adopted a tripartite funding policy developing 'P3s': partnerships between government, non-profit and for-profit organisations, educational organisations and private developers; 'C-CEs': cultural-creative enterprises that require flexible and multifaceted spaces that can be used by diverse players and cultural creators; and 'P-PFs': reformed public-private financial frameworks that "embrace blended for-profit and not-for-profit interconnections" (Duxbury 2008, pp.81-82; CECC 2008d).

To achieve implementation of this policy, Canada has embarked on developing four types of cultural-creative spaces: multi-use hubs (shared resources for arts, culture, heritage and library facilities), incubators (umbrella facilities encompassing spaces that act as a platform of support for creators and consumers), multi-sector convergence projects (convergence centres that maximise socialisation, networking, and random collision between cultural practitioners), and artist live/work complexes (affordable live-work complexes that offer long-term leases to cultural partnerships) (Duxbury 2008, pp.82-83; CECC 2008b). This comprehensive Canadian strategy offers promising models for cultural development in Australia. Inevitably, too, it leads to mixed models of funding and support where culture becomes a priority for all levels of government. Over recent decades, Queensland has seen responsibility for culture shift from central government alone to include that of state or regional governments, a shift now increasingly pursued by local government too. At this level, the mantra of rates, roads and rubbish is long gone, replaced by cultural enrichment, diversity and development.

Dang and Duxbury describe the typology of cultural facilities commonly found across Canada as single-purpose arts facilities, multi-discipline arts and cultural centres, multipurpose neighbourhood or community centres, mixed-use facilities, cultural hubs or complexes, and arts and cultural incubators (2007, p.7). In the main, these categories fit with those available across Queensland, although the larger number of them fit in the categories of single-purpose arts facilities (for example, a theatre), and multi-discipline arts and cultural centres (such as those single venues with spaces for dance, music and other artistic activity). There are examples of each of the remaining categories, like the Judith Wright Centre of Contemporary Arts which serves as an arts and cultural incubator in Brisbane, and some privately-owned facilities, like Karnak Playhouse in far north Queensland.

Arts Queensland has recently completed a study exploring the potential to strengthen production of performing arts in Queensland, including via arts hubs such as those found in Canada, and not unlike the possibilities available at the Judith Wright Centre of Contemporary Arts. Although the report from this study is yet to be released, an early acknowledgment of the benefit of such models conceded the need for effective resourcing of such facilities (Arts Queensland, 2008c). The study has yet to yield tangible outcomes but even so, within the remaining diversity of venues across Queensland, there exists a hierarchy of models defined by expectations, funding, and governance.

Changing models

To the complexity already existing in relationships between performance and place in Queensland is added the mix of governance models found among Queensland performance venues. As acknowledged by multilevel governance models in Canada, success for a venue is often linked with the potential afforded the facility by its governance. As Cliche and her colleagues explain, "arts organisations ... need a special type of managerial capacity. Their executive leaders and managers must, in addition to organisational and economic skills, know the arts and artistic world" (2002, p.298). Further, in the presentation of performing arts events, "it goes without saying that the availability of funding and economic support play a decisive role" (p.300), a factor of considerable relevance to the likely impact of governance.

When measuring success, non-profit organisations use more than the financial criteria on which profit-led organisations rely. Because many public facilities deal with a diversity of "heterogeneous, diffuse, ambiguous and sometimes contradictory goals", prioritising objectives may be difficult (p.86). In Queensland, some cultural centres are owned and managed by local government, some by state government, and a small number are either private ventures or a mix of government subsidy with independent leadership. Whilst they are only one of the instruments which sustain a venue's capacity to support performance, the conditions of governance have considerable potential to affect artistic outcomes through their framing of decisions and measures relative to cultural initiatives. Where community investment in cultural infrastructure proves unsustainable for specific cultural activity, that activity may be threatened in times of economic concern. Cliche offers examples of collaborations between small projects and major cultural institutions in Europe, suggesting that "developing these co-operative relations is certainly one of the strategic targets for the future system of governance of creativity" (2002, p.324).

The framework of contemporary Queensland cultural policy and the performing arts reflects these trends, and highlights the increasing importance of concepts of community, identity and place. As was the case in Cliche's study, cultural activity may reveal previously concealed local and regional resources, and the collective 'belonging' where community is involved in performance generates energy which "confirms the old adage that money can't buy everything" (2002, pp.325-6). The potential for collaborations has implications for policy-makers, and indeed, "for improving the structures of the governance system as a whole" (p.327). Because of the range of artistic organisations which work throughout the vast area of Queensland, it is important that the governance of venues and of organisations support the needs of both mobile and resident performance artists, and collaborate to maximise the potential inherent among the range of performance spaces across the state, from iconic to alternative.

Prestige and specificity do not necessarily insure such venues against the impact of any cultural change which affects the performances associated with them. As Schippers and Bartleet explain,

> many of these buildings and organisations struggle with audiences that feel disenfranchised from their offerings. The changing cultural landscape of contemporary urban areas is rapidly transforming the ways in which people engage with the arts. In these urban environments, these transformations have triggered the development of new sites for artistic creation and consumption. (2005, p.1)

Changing technologies

Of increasing significance is the impact of less-easily defined places for performance, such as those found among online and social networks. Some of these never meet physically. Technology has transformed the notion of place, having "its most profound effect when it alters the ways in which people come together and communicate" (Smith and Kollock, 1999, p.4). Virtual spaces are of particular significance to young people, who connect to and through the arts online. Because their lifestyles are mobile, young people are "heavy users of new technology - especially computers and mobile phones, [and] ... the spectacular rise in popularity of 'social networking' sites like MySpace and Facebook" testify to this (Eltham, personal communication, October 3, 2006). Eltham claims that this trend toward social networking "is also depressing live music audiences ... in favour of artist-specific audiences driven by peer pressure on sites like MySpace" (personal communication, October 3, 2006). He offers the example of Toxic Lipstick, who were

> obscure but very popular (in an underground sense) when they played the 2002, 2003 and 2004 Straight Out Of Brisbane festivals, before moving to Osaka in early 2006. Despite playing few gigs in Japan, since then their MySpace presence has exploded, with over 54,000 downloads of their songs. This is unheard of for an independent Brisbane experimental music act. (personal communication, October 3, 2006)

In addition to the widespread and rapidly expanding use of the web to access recorded performances, technology is also making available new places for the 'live' creation of art. Interactive performance online has been a possibility ever since 1997 when William Duckworth made Cathedral available online with "new virtual instruments that we created, and a live band that played both in concert and online" (quoted in Draper, 2007, p.4). Although not all online performance is interactive, it does nonetheless attract an audience roughly of the same size as "traditional culture vultures" in the United Kingdom (Arts audiences: insight, 2008, p.12). This recent study undertaken for the Arts Council of England confirmed that 'Bedroom DJs' do not attend arts events, but do engage online in a range of creative activities which includes playing a musical instrument, and dancing. Their place of engagement is most often cyberspace. According to this research, if they do engage physically, they are more likely to respond to events which are 'creative', 'entertainment', or 'social' (p.35). It is worth noting that Ben Eltham had also coined the term 'Bedroom DJs' prior to 2006 to describe creative artists who were "artistically very advanced, technically proficient, but working in a genre where they were unable to find support for in the institutionalised Brisbane scene" (personal communication, October 3, 2006), adding another dimension to the reason for creating and sharing artistic work online. In response to this phenomenon, the State Library of Queensland opened a dedicated place for the creation of such work in 2009: according to its website, The Edge on South bank

> is designed to broaden and bridge education, arts, technology and enterprise platforms. It offers space for collaborative learning, experimentation and exploration of craft, technique and technology connecting informal learning with formal education, creative, cultural and business networks.

Arts audiences suggests that the virtual world is not impenetrable: by adopting language relevant to virtual consumers, artists may venture beyond the real world. It can be equally difficult to penetrate established places if one does not have a clear understanding of the specific culture within. Armed with an understanding of the specific community culture associated with any place, traditional or new, artists and arts organisations may generate significant change in what they do and the way they do it. Indeed, the endorsement of local community cultures has been a dialectical reaction to contemporary globalisation, manifested through "measures aimed at restoring people's sense of community, identity, solidarity, and control over the decision-making processes affecting their lives" (Schaefer, 2002, p.1). The performing arts have the capacity to endorse the culture of any community, real or virtual.

Whether the performance takes place online or onstage, there is typically a three-part relationship between the creator (whether composer, choreographer, playwright, designer or director), the performer(s), and the audience. Graham contends that it is the performers who make the work exist "because without them the music would remain nothing more than the black marks on the score, the choreography a set of instructions without movement and the script a collection of unspoken sentences" (2005, p.149). From this perspective, the performance itself happens in the place between the stage and the audience, the soundscape, or the headspace in which the performers imagine and realise the work, and audiences receive it. That place where the performance exists is shaped not only by the vision of those who perform the work, who are in turn are swayed by their own artistic experiences, but it is also affected by the receptivity among the audience, in their readiness to receive the performance.

Brown and Novak suggest that a variety of situational factors might shape audience readiness, including "the temperature in the theater, the comfort of the seating and the lighting in the hall [...even] the composition and character of the audience itself (e.g. experience level, cultural alignment with the artist)" (2007, p.44).

Brown and Novak's research into the stimuli affecting audience decision-making describes captivation, anticipation, intellectual stimulation, spiritual value, aesthetic growth, social bonding, and emotional resonance as components in the amalgam which affects audience response to performance. Their findings suggest that Impact is simply too unpredictable, and too much depends on the performance itself. Even when audiences have moderate to high levels of readiness, they may report low levels of impact. In certain situations, however, higher levels of readiness can be associated with higher levels of impact. In these situations, higher levels of readiness — especially Anticipation levels — seem to magnify impact. (ibid., p.78)

Changing influences

Given that readiness to receive might be affected by factors beyond the performer's control, the place in which the performance exists may well be affected by the combined result of all these influences on each occasion a performance occurs. As Brown and Novak explain, "this would help to explain why the same program in two different locations generates different levels of [what they call] Captivation" (op. cit., p.44).

Some situational factors which influence audience readiness relate specifically to place - those connected with physical comfort may, through anticipation, frame audience readiness even before their arrival. It is not surprising then that Brown and Novak suggest that programming unfamiliar performance work might best be done in venues which are more likely to meet these physical needs, those which are familiar, comfortable, maybe even local, are known factors which might become "pathways into the art forms" for new audiences (2007, p.55).

By selecting a venue which meets audience expectations of access and physical comfort, performance companies may be part-way towards achieving audience receptiveness.

That less tangible 'readiness' which comes from audience experience, both personal and corporate, is more likely to be achieved by drawing the audience into the experience, developing anticipation through interaction before and after the performance (p.78). Further, audience readiness is often intensified by social interaction before and after the performance takes place. As arts organisations appreciate, social bonding plays an influential role on readiness to receive a performance (Brown and Novak, p.59). Social bonding might occur with other audience members, and also with performers. This study found deliberate attempts by both audience and arts producers to guarantee such interaction: audience attending in groups, organisations arranging for interaction between artists and audience; and providing opportunities for the development of bonds between single attendees.

The complexity of audience readiness can be equally relevant to virtual audiences: the audience needs to be approached as a dynamic process. It is a relation constructed and emerging from a heterogeneous network of materials: subjectivities; practices; technologies; passions; desires and enjoyments; academic methodologies and research agendas; corporate marketing initiatives; venture capital; global media corporate relationships, and so on. (Banks, 2002, p.190)

Redefining Places for Art also encountered tangible examples of the impact of a performance designed to bring the audience closer to the action. Audience members related an enduring impression from being in close proximity to some performances, one which inclined them to want more. Proximity is a significant variant in how audiences experience performance (McCauley, 1999, p.55). When physically present in the performance space, "it is through their bodies that [the audience] experience the performance" (p.55).

This is particularly relevant to dance where "issues of close or distant have different spatial meanings. In terms of live dance performance, distant is often not more than forty metres away (at the most) and close, in a traditional front-facing theatre, is still usually about ten metres away" (Dyson, 2010, p.34). Dance performances set even closer to the audience than these distances imply, may do so consciously intending to engage the audience: "the intimacy of noticing a smile, seeing how difficult a move is, or hearing someone fall is integral to the potency of engaging with the dancers; to understand that they are living (and dancing) in the same moment" (p.42).

Changing communities

All of this relates to particular physical, virtual or imagined places: location of various kinds, shapes and sizes. Like every city, each small town has its own patchwork of neighbourhoods, and overlapping communities of interest. Carter and her colleagues caution against a minimalist approach to rural cultures which ignores their complexity:

> Rural communities are diverse, sometimes more diverse than urban communities, in their mix of Indigenous and non-Indigenous residents and/or as a result of particular patterns of 'ethnic' migration. What might we make of the importance of Italian migration to the canefields of North Queensland? (2008, p.2)

Queensland is one of the few states in Australia where more of the population live outside the capital city (Brisbane) than in it. Although it might seem reasonable that performance should be shared equitably across the state, the reality is quite different.

The metropolis of Brisbane has the largest performance venues in Queensland, and the largest number of them. Whilst most regional cities and towns have arts centres or theatres – some more than one – the greatest diversity is found in Brisbane.

Yet, as this study suggests, even Brisbane does not have enough places for performance, either in diversity or the total number of available seats. Across the vast state, distances are a real challenge to equity. Yet in many ways, these distances also allow for the development of different responses to the relationship between art and place. South Australian playwright, composer and social entrepreneur Pat Rix confirms that each community, geographical and social, has its own relationship to place: "Find that deep theme within the community — it's very much attached to place" (personal communication May 10, 2009). Access is not only related to physical distance, but also to perceived cultural distance. Synergies of distance exist between city and suburb; high and low art; performer and participant; curation and creation of art (Schippers & Bartleet, 2005, p.4).

Each performance place has its own issues of access and relevance to the community it serves. External factors, such as the design of concert halls, have exhibited aspects of human relationships by exuding images of wealth, power and exclusion of the 'outside' world (Small, 1998, p.25). Small notes that such places often communicate clear divisions between the audience and performer, divisions which have their origins in class distinctions of earlier centuries (pp.26-27). Concert halls carry expectations of behaviour, both social and musical, which may isolate those who are unfamiliar with one or the other. A study by the Arts Council of England found that the barriers to attending performances are psychological rather than physical, and that the arts may put some people off. As one respondent in their study explained, "if it's not something you've ever done and never really got to know, then you don't know whether you are going to really enjoy it" (What people want from the arts, 2008, p.8).

The rise of the professional performer and subsequent removal of amateur performance from the public eye has meant that most people are left to watch instead of participate in performance (Small, 1998, p.73). Herein lies the foundation for that clear division between performer and audience which developed in the latter part of the nineteenth century, a division which is a possible reason for decreasing cultural participation in some artforms (Scherger, 2008, p.22). Coincidentally, it is that same elitist division which causes the persistent habit of training classical music students in the orchestral tradition, "much like bespoke tailors, when the reality is that today's musician or composer is called upon to be many things" (Canham, 2009, p.3). The elitist tradition retains the formal positioning which feeds the elitist division between performer and audience, stage and stall, informing if not dictating clearly defined places for each.

Changing realities

Smaller and flexible spaces may be more accessible to a wider audience because they do not necessarily carry the same expectations as larger ones. Their relevance to the community may be dependent on social elements, which can change over time. This study confirms trends among arts organisations choosing to engage with a broader community; and the community responding with increased interest in diverse places for experiencing the performing arts.

Within this complexity, the term 'community' may not necessarily imply a homogenous self-contained group (Carter et al, 2002, p.2). Lyndon Terracini acknowledges this complexity by insisting on the necessity "to become attuned to the issues of concern ... of the people whom we wish to be included" in any performance, or finding out "what makes [people] tick." As a consequence of that revelation, "it is our responsibility to create work which resonates immediately with the ordinary citizen" (2007, p.21). Relevance to every level of the community is significant. In the words of Australian Indigenous actor Tom Lewis: "The country is a church. If we don't [all] sing and dance and act, the church lights go out" (art at the heart, 2008). This touches upon the "deep veins of social context surrounding arts attendance" (Brown & Novak, 2007, p.1).

As a consequence, local realities are significant, and artistic success is specific to a time and a place. "Local demographics, community imperatives (such as the need for expanded music education), local tastes — these and other considerations should guide [artistic] choice" (Wolf & Glaze, 2005, p.79). Yet as we have seen the reality at local level in regional Queensland is that in the last few decades, cultural infrastructure has developed, primarily in the form of the local 'cultural centre', 'civic centre', 'arts centre' or just plain theatre, based on the conventional proscenium stage space.

Given the uncertainties of a sustainable future, Russell questions the reasons for building such spaces, noting that many companies are "too starry-eyed about what it takes to run new facilities" (2008, p.135). The inference is that when companies seek to gain a home of their own for performance, they do not expect also to become venue managers.

Thus, whilst they may have been fought for and welcomed by local professional and amateur arts-makers, once in place, new performance places suffer from the economic realities which make it difficult for such organisations to continue to build their work on their own terms. Indeed, for some of the newer generation of professional arts companies, the conventional (large and relatively inflexible) space has not always been their choice of place. Without a performance 'home' of their own, many such companies create site-specific work, or seek non-conventional (smaller and often more flexible) spaces. Enter the alternative venue in its various incarnations: in Brisbane, the Powerhouse and the Judith Wright Centre of Contemporary Arts; in Cairns, the Centre of Contemporary Arts and the Tanks Arts Centre; in Toowoomba, the Church at the Empire Theatre complex; the list goes on. Even with this newer generation of spaces, demand is such that the smaller professional organisations aren't guaranteed access for performance. For amateur organisations, the barriers are even greater. Economic reality and availability dictate that the amateur performer is more likely to be found in a smaller, less well-equipped, creaky space which has been around for longer than they have.

Changing relationships

Terracini likens the relationship between art places and the ordinary citizen to "what Aboriginal Australians have always done, told stories about their country, their people, and their everyday activities, which are then passed on by the 'story keepers' of their place" (2007, p.21). Through his work as a festival director in metropolitan and regional Queensland, Terracini successfully exploited the notion that every place has not only its own history but also its stories of place: its own culture.

In so doing, he brought about a significant attitudinal change to local culture, particularly in some regional centres (see Cluster 3). According to Miles and Adams, "Awareness proceeds change. The place of art, as an imaginative presence, perhaps an agent for wider change, is gaining recognition" (1989, p.1). By consulting with the local people, and designing his artistic product on local stories, Terracini has raised the level of awareness of local culture in many regional and metropolitan centres of Queensland, allowing change to develop.

Miles and Adams confirm that art has the potential to be a vehicle for change, but to do so it needs to become "more than a cosmetic intervention, ... [and] more than the nineteenth-century concept of a monument". They ask if it might be possible to foresee art as central to a place:

> integrated with major public buildings and a sense of what the place is all about? Is it mere nostalgia to look to the Cathedrals, and ponder a new but equivalent unity of art and architecture, of private reverie and public rite, based in a new, and secular, common wealth of symbolic imagery?" (1989, pp.4-5)

Theatre director Sue Rider would agree that this suggestion is more than mere nostalgia: her experience of directing theatrical works in Brisbane's St John's Cathedral has caused her to reflect that:

> Putting theatre into a non-theatre site is always a challenge, but it can also break down conventional barriers and create new relationships, not only between actors and audience, but within audiences themselves as they arrive together for a new experience in a new space. Theatre becomes then what it should always be — a celebration of our shared humanity, feeding the spirit as well as the intellect and emotions, something that perhaps we need now more than ever. (2009, p.4)

> Just as Terracini understood the need for recognising local history and developing local sensibility before creating the performance, so too Miles and Adams underline the relationship between identity and place:
> To confer identity requires an understanding of the nature of the place. It has three main aspects: the physical location, the people who use the space, and the local history (which may suggest a theme, or give a reason why a space becomes a focal point as well as being a vehicle for community involvement. (1989, p.8, our italics)
> Miles and Adams also acknowledge the potential for audiences to become active, suggesting that this has "both a political and an imaginative dimension, and the two are not necessarily separate." Florida recognises personal connection to place, confirming that "sociologists and psychologists have long pointed out that self-expression is a major source of happiness. A place is a means to that end. ... Place offers us characteristics by which to define ourselves" (2008, p.159).

For Queensland performance artist Dani Powell, place is fundamental to her work, all of which is developed on site and performed "as a kind of installation in that site, or performed elsewhere." Powell explains that "performance has been for me a point of entry into the landscape, into a place. It might be the relationship between inhabiting and performing that actually seeds my work" (personal communication, October 29, 2008).

Living in Central Australia at the time of this study, Powell perceives her role as facilitating "ways of embodying the land, finding one's own relationship with it." She expresses concern that given:

> the transitional nature of communities in Central Australia we risk falling into a-historical interpretations of the present, which can feed the significant sense of loss that abounds in this place — culture, language, history — and in turn contribute positively to the significant social tensions which exist. (personal communication, October 29, 2008)

Powell sees her work as a performative image of a place that is constantly forming. Her central interest in place stems from experiencing theatrical performances presented outside conventional spaces during her formative years as a performer in Brisbane. Her experience is testament to Mossop's argument that normalising the role of the artist in urban development is important to the process of urban development.

It is perhaps ironic that although the performances which shaped Powell's development had no impact on city planning at the time, her early experiences now manifest themselves in her own work in Central Australia, shaping the experiences of young people in and around Alice Springs, influencing local government decisions to provide space for artistic work. In an ideal world, Mossop would have artists' involvement integrated into design briefs and project budgets (2001, p.22). Instead, she warns that because most decision makers are concerned with short-term political impact, "the design of public space is an intensely problematic field" (quoted in Bartleet, 2002, p.11).

Through their varying relationships with local places and identity, the arts have the potential to make significant contributions to the communities with which they interact: they bring "the highest quality to your moments as they pass" (Walter Pater, quoted in Schaefer, 2002, p.2); they contribute to social cohesion, to the economy; to beautification and attractiveness of localities; to "peace, harmony, and cross-cultural communication, understanding and respect" (p.3); and they shape the "uniqueness, distinctiveness and personalities" of locations they inhabit (pp.2-3). Influenced by the arts, localities "look, smell, sound and feel different; they have a different character or ambience" (Rapoport, 1984, p.54).

Peter Browning reminds us that "Cities don't stand still!" (2002, p.2), so it is then "not surprising that more and more city planners and policy-makers are focusing on the role that 'the creative industries' play in urban development" (or the development of one's 'place') (Schaefer, 2002, p.3). History would suggest that it was ever so, that cultural icons like opera houses, concert halls, theatres, museums and galleries were always considered essential to the liveability of a city (p.2). Yet such places emerged by and large with the nineteenth century. Their assumed antiquity is what Hobsbawm (2003, p.1) refers to as 'invented traditions' – but the mechanism prevails. This is borne out by the fact that special funding provided to celebrate Australia's Bicentenary was allocated in many regional centres to the provision of a new 'arts centre' manifested in many guises. Almost inadvertently explaining this fact, Mossop coincidentally states that

> Public space is less often generated as the result of master plans or grand scale civic projects. It is more commonly driven by a specific event or individual project, by the need to provide more and better services, or by urban redevelopment resulting from changes in land use. (2001, p.16)

In fact, in the quest for more liveable cities in Australia we seem to be struggling with dilemmas of how to place a value on our civic life (p.11). When the funding was available which allowed the manifestation of 'civic pride', regional authorities chose the iconic option. But in some cases the trend Schaefer describes extends beyond the provision of iconic facilities in cities and regional towns. It looks past traditional cultural activity and into creative use of any space; applying planning which allows development to sneak into communities through the making of art in places once considered unlikely.

Until the early 1990s, Rotterdam was such an 'unlikely' place. Close in proximity to iconic cultural cities like The Hague, Utrecht and Amsterdam, Rotterdam had been "regarded for decades as a city of trade and industry" (Schippers & Bartleet, 2005, pp.4-5). Schippers and Bartleet describe a gradual change driven by "Hans Kombrink, a visionary alderman for culture from 1994-2002, who governed a portfolio that combined the arts and public spaces" and enticed to the city "a number of cutting-edge arts organisations, disillusioned with the arrogance of the established Amsterdam art scene and municipal politics" (p.5). When Rotterdam became European Capital of Culture in 2001, "inspired by Calvino's Invisible Cities, curator Bert van Meggelen chose as an overarching theme 'Rotterdam is many cities' ", thus leaving open the option of "a diversity that characterises a city … not weighed down by tradition." By employing many subthemes for 'R2001', this celebration of Rotterdam's multi-faceted cultural identity emphasised inclusiveness, reducing divisions in urban cultural life. Schippers and Bartleet suggest that this approach has "obvious parallels to the realities and potential of Brisbane" (p.5).

Rogers describes one legacy of making art in unlikely places in the example of Morunda Bush Entertainment Committee's courageous presentation of the Oz Opera production of Carmen in a purpose-built pig shed in 2006:

> It was a black tie event that attracted audiences from all over the Riverina as well as from Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide. Such was the success that Victorian Opera performed Cosi fan tutte the following year, and [in 2008] Oz Opera returned with Madama Butterfly. The shed now bears the glorious name 'Paradise Palladian Theatre' and is the venue for all kinds of musical events. Such is the interest in opera in the district that they are now running operatic workshops for children. (2009, p.3-4)

There is often much debate among stakeholders on whether a pre-existing building should be used in preference to a new one. The example of the restoration of the Empire Theatre in Toowoomba demonstrates this division. The initial push by one local Councillor and eventually the decision of the Council to restore the old art deco building rather than build a new arts centre cost the Toowoomba Council (all but one) their seats at the following election. Yet now, barely fifteen years later, the Empire Theatre is proudly supported by the very community which argued against its restoration. A second such example comes from Lismore City Council which was considering a new theatre at a cost of $16 million. Working with Northern Rivers Performing Arts (NORPA) at the time, Lyndon Terracini suggested that they refurbish the City Hall instead, at a cost of about one million dollars. As he said "every town, every place, they all want their own Cultural Centre. In most places it's an oxymoron. Whereas if they spent that money on making artistic work, people would travel to see it" (personal communication, August 13, 2009).

Some artforms continue to opt for what we call 'conventional' (in lieu of 'traditional') places because they are capable of being transformed as required. Dance, for example, has specific needs, not the least of which is the capacity for the audience to see the dancers from head to toe. In a conventional venue, these parameters are met, and the stage can be converted as required using sets and lighting designs, based on the known specifications available in that venue.

To move outside the known space, a dance company confronts a list of questions which have all been addressed in the conventional venue: how to meet safety issues, whether full movement is possible, how to transport the audience into the story of the dance without the magic brought about by sets and lighting. For the orchestra, beyond a core concern about acoustics, it may be as simple as knowing how many instrumentalists (and instruments) will fit on the stage and what access there may be for setting them up. Very often, companies have to trade off the benefits and certainties of performing in the comfort zone of the known place against performing in new places that create new challenges, some of them insurmountable or at least perceived as such.

Place and Access

The issue of accessibility impacts differently on performers and audiences, and this dichotomy may even be an entirely different concept for each. In the case of the audience, the concept of accessibility reaches beyond the physical capacity to gain access to a performance; it may well relate to a perception of status and exclusivity from which the audience feels alienated, or which is simply irrelevant to their everyday cultural pursuits. For performers too, access is multi-faceted: it relates to having places suited to their physical requirements; it may even involve their individual access as artists to professional experience which extends the boundaries of their capacities within the artform. Being close to the audience changes what the artists might do and challenges performance quality because "there is no mystery … no detachment" (Monk,1997, p.22, quoted in Dyson, 2010, p.39).

In cases of extending the artform itself, the performers' access to audiences may also be associated with retaining their appeal to audiences, or building new ones. In Australians and the Arts, Costantoura reports that 84% of their surveyed population believe the arts should be "more accessible and available to average Australians" and 81% would feel more positive if there were "a greater sense that the arts are available to everyone" (2001, p.28). Whilst the report did not cross-reference data, these findings might well be aligned with performance places: reasons offered for negativity about the arts "generally relate to a lack of engagement", and "practical factors of cost and distance are often mentioned as inhibiting" connection with the arts. Although Costantoura found that elitism and inaccessibility are often lesser reasons for lack of engagement, his data reveal that "about half the population associate the arts with elitist and pretentious people and places" (p.26). If places for performance are perceived as elitist or pretentious, their effect on audience is easily predictable. Ordinary Australians may support the arts in principle, but do not themselves indulge in what they might consider irrelevant to their lives.

When organisations endeavour to make 'high art' accessible to regional areas, they often do so in places rarely designed for it, and certainly not at all what Costantoura would call 'pretentious'. Relating one early experience touring a production of New Opera South Australia (now State Opera SA), Robyn Archer notes the extent (and expense) to which Arts Councils went to bring opera to a tiny number of people to small places.

Speaking of this tour for the Northern Territory Arts Council, Archer (2009) describes what she then called the "Katherine Opera House", a vast tin-roofed structure with no walls in the township of Katherine.

"Under the tin roof was a bunch of stalwarts who still needed to prove that opera was a sign of civilisation," she comments. Then a young opera singer, Lyndon Terracini was a fellow performer with her on that tour. Archer believes that "it would not go unnoticed by Lyndon that the extremely elite musical skills he now works with at Opera Australia (OA), have in recent years been enjoyed in the flesh mainly by Sydneysiders alone, and fewer and fewer Melbournians, and very few [via OA] in other states [of Australia]. That's something he will want to change" (personal communication, June 15, 2010).

Herein lies a possible mismatch in the perception of accessibility between artists (and organisations) and potential audiences. According to Costantoura, some performing arts organisations prefer to retain their connection with those 'safe' houses with which they are most familiar and on which their benefactors and subscription base depends (2001, p.286).

If the audience can't come to the 'safe' house, the product is adapted and taken to them, or - in some cases - not even considered for touring. For reasons already described relating to the varying capacities of performance places available outside Brisbane, the regional version is often very different from the original. Regional audiences feel no obligation to call this "access" when compared to what their metropolitan friends have available to them. From this perception emerges the question of whether current funding models encourage creative work which is not guaranteed to attract audiences.

Government policy often fails to see this connection with 'safe' houses. The Creative City Strategy developed for the "Living in Brisbane 2010" vision document (2002) claims "significant investment in flagship cultural facilities and infrastructure to support cultural activities and provide a significant opportunity for people to engage with arts activities of the highest standard" (Brecknock, Reflecting Culture, 2002, p.6). This comment seems not to align with Costantoura's reporting of only a year earlier that "many people cannot see the entry points ... the transition from where they are to where they could imagine to be" (2001, p.302).

Cultural significance of place: access via a 'meeting place'

In fact, artists and curators are making the greatest contribution towards those goals of using new and different venues, including non-conventional spaces. Compared to the Brecknock strategy, Lyndon Terracini's vision for the Brisbane Festival in 2006

> was designed to reflect the cultural and artistic landscape of the city of Brisbane and the state of Queensland ... a 'meeting place' at which to celebrate and encourage dialogue articulated musically, theatrically and through many other forms of cultural and artistic expression. (2007, p.17)

This vision persisted in the Brisbane Festival of 2008, and both festivals proved logical successors to Terracini's work in the Queensland Music Festivals of 2003, 2005 and 2007, all of it specifically directed towards building on the relationship a community has with its own places. But for Terracini, whilst a festival may be focused on the culture of a place, it carries a wider vision than just setting a performance in a particular space:

> It should be about fundamentally understanding what resonates within the people who live there, left there, or died there; and about translating those deep local associations for the benefit of a much wider audience. It should be a place where big ideas take root, where inspirational individuals and artists who believe passionately in their cultural and artistic responsibilities can plant seeds that will grow to nourish the minds of a broader community. (2007, pp.11-12)

Terracini explains this through the example of David Malouf's novel Johnno, what he calls "a profound reflection on the culture of post-war Brisbane" (p.12). Believing its impact is as potent today as when it was first published thirty years ago because the vividness of its sense of locality creates the reader's (or audience) experience of place, Terracini sees this work as capable of moving even beyond the original constituency. Convinced that "Johnno speaks directly to [all] Australians, but it also has a strong international resonance" (p.21). Terracini commissioned an adaption of the novel to open the Brisbane Festival in 2006, and also presented this to British audiences at the Derby Playhouse in 2007.
Taking no credit for the success of this concept, Terracini points to his experience as a member of the international jury for the Venice Biennale of Music, where "this peculiar phenomenon of the 'culture of place' was demonstrated in the works presented"(2007, p.14), and "I was not the only one aware of this"(p.15). He summarises the foundation of his work in this way:

> To create work that has important cultural significance to a particular place and people, and which is then embraced universally as an important artistic creation, is what every artist strives for. It's the pursuit of that elusive state that we define as art; it's our eternal quest. (p.17)

Work that has significance for particular places and people has the potential to change the way people see the world (or how the world perceives them). As Croggan suggests,

> Multiply those individual experiences by millions of festivalgoers over several decades, and that's a big cumulative effect. It's also untraceable: a stimulus might bear fruit decades later, in ways that no one can foresee or quantify. It might appear — unrecognizably — in an artwork that wouldn't have existed if it hadn't been for an explosive artistic experience that illuminated a new way of thinking. Or, even less traceably, it might simply exist in an insight that has influenced an intimate relationship or how we see the natural world or live in our communities. (2010, p.1)

Examples of such kinds do exist, and some of them are revealed in this report. Consider, perhaps, the delayed response of the "redneck" from Winton described by Paul Grabowsky in his account of the opening of his Queensland Music Festival in Winton, in July 2007 (see Cluster 3). Maybe Lyndon Terracini's Into Africa events might begin to change the way the various African communities living in Brisbane view one another; perhaps his Cherbourg Walk in the 2009 Brisbane Festival might give non-Indigenous people a better insight into the stories of those Indigenous people who were forcibly moved from their Brisbane homeland a century ago (see Cluster 3). Such performance events can change lives, and the way we position ourselves in communities. Certainly performance events like Cherbourg Walk are more accessible to people from Indigenous communities than are most performances of high art. Statistics published by the Cultural Ministers Council (2005) indicate that in non-remote areas, Indigenous adults were less likely to attend what they [the CMC] defined as artistic events than non-Indigenous adults. Clearly, this is not surprising when, as the statistics confirm that a percentage of non-Indigenous Australians do not relate to the practices of the concert hall and opera house, many others of non-European backgrounds might also experience barriers to performances at iconic venues in particular.

Access via new media

Other large performance sites including the large movie screen and the stadium rock concert; the digital environment; and technology have opened possibilities for more spectacular, customised, and "theatricalised" events. Arthurs and Radbourne claim that "the traditional concert hall or opera house now has many fierce competitors" (2007, p.6), that

> the musical environments which have opened up over the past twenty years have blurred the lines between live, prerecorded and preprogrammed. This is achieved increasingly seamlessly using programs such as ProTools, MAX or Ableton Live and the ever-growing list of inventive gestural controllers — new instruments that can create new sounds from new sources. (p.7)

Reminding us that the original orchestral experience "was built on innovation, new instrument design, large well-built buildings allowing for very large ensembles, musical volume and textures unheard before", Arthurs and Radbourne challenge the notion that 'traditional' performance must be enduring (p.7).

Their research based on the Deep Blue project positions what they call a 're-imagined' orchestra in that new performance place which incorporates theatrical, technological, and musical elements with social interaction. Rather than turn phones off before a performance, the audience is encouraged to leave them on, and use them to engage with and respond to the performance.

The recent proliferation of literature on new media unlocks diverse spaces through discussions on cultural technologies, virtual communities, digital media, e-commerce, e-education and cyber-politics. This discourse challenges traditional notions of space, place, accessibility, reception, and community, together with engagement with the commercial sector, non-arts-based government agencies, and community-based organisations in the quest for arts performance. As was established by Huysmans, Van den Broek and De Haan, new media and the internet together offer a gateway to culture for those people who found that the constraints of time, distance, price, organisation and accessibility are removed when using them (2005, p.72). Research by the Arts Council of England confirms that even those who do attend performances are likely to explore digital space as a complement to the performance, "with the potential for deeper and more fulfilling experiences as a result" (Arts in the Digital Age, 2009, p.46). But it should be remembered that most of this activity is predominantly passive.

New media incorporates an array of techniques and technologies that human societies use for communication, bringing together sectors that once were separate, such as computing, telecommunications, and media. Such collaboration and experimentation are often located in cross-artform work, their interactive potential opening a variety of doors to performance. Robyn Archer describes VOLUME, a work she placed in Melbourne's Federation Square for The Light in Winter in 2009:

> VOLUME is the creation of the UK's United Visual Artists. It is a forest of 47 LED columns, and each column has its own speaker on top. A remote camera tracks the movements of a maximum of 12 visitors at a time and both light and sound on the columns are activated by this movement. Each speaker has a different component of the sound track composed by Massive Attack's Neil Davidge and Robert Del Naja. By moving between columns you activate a different piece of the sound track. You play with it — standing quietly by one column (many children embraced them — it was an amazing kid-calmer), or skipping between many finding that your ear would hold one piece of the soundtrack and simultaneously pick up others as you walked past. It's an entrancing piece and over four weeks, some 50,000 Melburnians stepped in to play. (2009, p.4)

Access in real time

Archer is quick to note that those are good numbers for a composer, questioning whether music creations need to remain committed to the "full frontal assault of formal stages" (4). Such examples of digital and converging arts illustrate how new media are bringing profound change to the performing arts. Rush explains their impact on visual arts in words that ring true also among the performance arts,

> initiated by inventions outside the world of art, technology-based art has directed art into areas once dominated by engineers and technicians ....the art that has been born from [this] marriage is perhaps the most ephemeral art of all: the art of real time. (1999, p.8)

In the art of real time, space is internal, within one's self, and place is not defined by spatial parameters, but by "networking, using mailing lists, social networking, [and] interviews", all of which make the 'performance' more fascinating (Mancuso, quoted in Zimireva, 2010, p.4). Mancuso's words imply that most cases of engagement with new media are related to dissemination of (and about) performance rather than using new media to create and manipulate a performance. However, as mentioned earlier, the concept of creating and manipulating performance online is one which William Duckworth has been developing since 1997, when he initiated interactive performance on the web using a sound palette of virtual instruments in the Cathedral project, which has continued to evolve.

Since that initial upload to the web, Duckworth's partner, media artist Nora Farrell has developed the multiuser PitchWeb which allows people to play together online in real time, and the mobile PitchWeb, which premiered in Tokyo in 2007 (Draper, 2007, p.3).

Virtual performance spaces will necessarily influence both production and consumption of performance. They have the potential to bring together people who, without the assistance of digital technology, are otherwise unable to be in the same space and time. If there is no external producer creating a virtual event in which people might participate, they curate their own 'performances' in whatever space they inhabit.
As Canham confirms,

> Right now, we are in the middle of the global-versus-local dilemma. On the one hand, people have unprecedented access to cultural experiences of all kinds. The artist/audience relationship is changing; audiences curate most of their arts experiences themselves. They can shuffle, remix, download and blog to their heart's content without the direct input of the artist. (2009, p.2)

Thus the internet brings a new performance place into being. As Banks explains, "internet technologies and the users forming around them are in the process of constructing a very different 'audience', with different practices, expectations, materials, tools and technologies" (2002, p.189). It is not only a new place for performance, it introduces a new relationship with the audience:

> Some commentators claim that the internet-based communication technologies of email, website forums, chat, and so on are creating an empowered audience/consumer who expects and demands that corporations will not only listen to their views, criticisms and input, but also enter into active dialogue with them. The former paradigm of traditional marketing is giving way to more open-ended exchanges between producer and consumer. Corporations are actively soliciting feedback from consumers and audience via email and interactive websites. Fan websites, for example, are emerging as important and influential intermediaries, actively managing the relationship between the broader online fan base and the corporation. (op.cit., p.189)

Among the new generation of performance artists are the members of Brisbane's Restaged Histories theatre company. Considering themselves "performance makers", Kieran Swann and Nic Dorward have a style which is informed by their digital upbringing. As they say, "to deny that impulse [of their digital experience] would be to simulate theatre that has gone before rather than breaking the rules and moving performance forward" (in Sorensen, 2009). In direct contrast to the perpetuation of traditional repertoire, the duo base their thinking on the expectation that "nothing, not even their own moment in the limelight" is likely to last. Their work transcends places, and the way in which they use place is reflective of this concept. Using the flexible space of the Brisbane Powerhouse for their creation, The Greater Plague, Dorward and Swann combined diverse media to push the theatre boundaries. For them, the new generation of performance hubs like the Powerhouse are where the action lies, in addition to digital spaces. As they suggest, "the producing hubs that are popping up will be the thing for a while. After that, who knows?" (in Sorensen, 2009).

In a performance which linked the virtual with the physical, in August 2007 the South Bank Parklands in Brisbane became a theatre in the round for a series of visual and sonic encounters formed by the high tech opera, iOrpheus, which centred on the Greek legend of Orpheus. Conceived and written by William Duckworth and Nora Farrell whose work uses the World Wide Web "as a place for creative sound activity", iOrpheus employed place as both technical platform and creative 'stage' (The New Landscape: Inside iOrpheus, 2007). Thus the notion of place was incorporated into this performance on a number of levels: the high-tech contemporary performance founded on a work formalised centuries earlier, placed itself in a virtual space across time; while in parallel, the World Wide Web provided a contemporary place for creative sound activity, engaging hundreds of people from the online world.

Participants in cyberspace used laptops, iPods and mobile phones in combination to create more performance spaces, some fixed and others moving, creating ribbons of sound which connected the performance places. More tangible were the soloists, ensembles and dancers producing musical tableaux across five sites in the Parklands which were the physical stages for performers and park visitors. Each audience member was able to choose the way in which they experienced the work. In the physical Parklands space, performers formed ribbons of sound, dispersing in all directions along walkways, through gardens, and into coffee shops. This audience was invited to linger as the sounds passed by, or to follow the music from scene to scene. Meanwhile, the extended audience experienced the event in whatever virtual space they chose to inhabit; altogether a different concept of place for performance. In this event, the live performance of opera converged in parallel with the mobile interactive environment, and was experienced beyond the immediate place of performance by many who could neither see nor be seen by those performers spread throughout the Parklands.

iOrpheus performers move through the public spaces of South Bank Parklands. Photo courtesy Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University

The potential demonstrated by such transformative use of place aligned with performance suggests that companies might usefully rethink the way in which they conceive the use of place in their artistic work. This example pushes the boundary of new media beyond its application for marketing and social networking into the possibilities it offers for consumption. As Duckworth explains about iOrpheus, in all of [our] work online, one of the things we found out is that people are willing to organise themselves into communities — look at Flickr, look at Facebook, and for creative artists, what that gives us is the ability then to blur the distinction between the amateur and the professional. It allows for elements of chance, because the collective contributions of people online always have uncertain outcomes. So when Nora [Farrell] and I look at the future, what we're seeing is an entirely new landscape made possible by music 2.0 that involves availability, portability, collectivity, and communications. (in Draper, 2007, p.4)

Composer Vincent Plush comments on the implications of this interactive event:

> From an archival point of view, iOrpheus provides some delicious challenges. How do you preserve an interactive opera where the virtual and physical worlds are deliberately brought together? By definition, no participant can experience everything so how and what do we try to preserve from such creations? (The New Landscape: Inside iOrpheus)

The event was filmed by four crews, but nonetheless the point Plush makes still stands. The boundaries for this experience are much wider than for the conventional performance, and many of them are as unpredictable as the potential layers through which one might choose to experience the work. Truly interactive work of this nature remains thus far limited, although the creative artistry of Duckworth and Farrell suggests that perceived limits may be somewhat self-imposed.

Organisation and funding of performing arts in Queensland

The performing arts in Queensland have experienced continuing (though not abundant) state government support, however, that hasn't guaranteed the enduring success of all arts organisations. In the early 1950s, it was a two-pronged crisis — cash and culture — which, according to Fotheringham, resulted in the failure of some companies (including Brisbane's TN! Company in 1991) while those which survived were adopting what he called "extreme means" to guarantee their survival. In particular, he revealed a "hierarchy of artistic activity" that "has profound consequences on government decision-making," driving funding decisions which led to the cash crisis (1993, p.45). Fotheringham blamed the bureaucratic division of companies into three classes: the 'A' group, the state and national 'flagships', well-funded companies receiving $1 million or more; the 'B' group, those aesthetically or programming alternative organisations receiving more than $100,000; and the ' C' group, the 'narrowcast' small companies receiving less than $100,000 (p.46).

Among arts companies nationally and in Queensland, a similar division persists today. There are the 'International' companies, for example, the Australian Chamber Orchestra; the 'Specialist' organisations like Bangarra Dance Theatre; the Australian 'flagship' companies like Opera Australia and the Sydney Theatre Company; and State 'flagship' companies such as Opera Queensland. Despite the suggestion from Arts Queensland that these categories be renamed 'Nationals', 'Artform leaders' and 'Innovators' (not necessarily in that order), this division has resulted in a well-supported elite group which Fotheringham suggests acts as a closed club and marshals resources against competition and duplication from other companies (p.49). Although flagship companies have been charged to play an incubator and umbrella role for other companies and productions, many will argue that this has in fact produced competition and fear of duplication between 'A' and 'B' companies, perhaps in addition to unexpected competition from the 'C' companies and regional activity.

It is worth noting that since 1999, 28 major Australian companies have received funding from the Australian Major Performing Arts Group (AMPAG) program of the Australia Council, including some from Queensland: Opera Queensland, Queensland Ballet, Queensland Symphony Orchestra and the Queensland Theatre Company. Nationally, the AMPAG program accounts for 70% of ticket-buying audiences, 86% of employment, and 80% of box office and corporate sponsorship in the arts. Among all performing arts organisations in Australia, government funding reportedly accounts for about a quarter of their income. Those in the AMPAG cohort fare considerably better from government subsidies, which account for 37% of revenue, supplemented by box office (43%), private sector (12%) and other (8%) (AMPAG, 2010).

According to Fotheringham, the so-called "great re-distribution debate" of the 1980s resulted in a "culture crisis" (1993, p.48). A new social agenda for the arts was driven by political ideology that aimed at redressing social disadvantage away from art for the elite and towards gender, ethnic, racial and class equality. Justified as "democratic diversity", this commitment to community arts and cultural development polarised artists and companies as it fundamentally challenged the artistic hierarchy. The result was perhaps unintended: companies continued to fail, there was less paid work for professional artists, less box office income and costs rose significantly as companies strove to be more accountable.

It also led to "schizophrenic programming" in the desire to appeal to a range of audiences, with apparently little evidence of sector success. Rather, "small scale, project-based work by 'C' companies, very inefficient but in total dollar terms not a major expense, has been used to respond to the demands of equity and access, at the expense of the 'B' companies, but without making much impact on 'A' team activity" (Fotheringham, p.58). In fact, this prediction has persisted over time, as the gap has widened between these categories. Now, even more so than before, the 'A' companies are "no longer flagships and fleet, but battleships and rowboats" (p.57). There is an ever-increasing challenge for government to bridge the divide and create synergies between and within them.

The goal of meeting this challenge has shaped Arts Queensland policy in recent years, with obvious implications for the relationship between performance and place. Considering a sectoral analysis of Queensland performing arts in this study, it is clear that Arts Queensland has become a highly proactive funding body, providing a range of performing arts programs and funding initiatives: to arts statutory authorities; for the small-to-medium sector; a regional touring fund; fund-raising development subsidies; and artist-run initiatives. It has a comprehensive role, striving

> to build a strong and diverse arts sector which celebrates Queensland's unique identity and cultural heritage, drives a thriving creative economy, develops the creative capital of Queensland communities and enriches the lives of all Queenslanders. Arts Queensland is an enthusiastic supporter of Queensland's burgeoning arts sector by developing and funding ongoing initiatives, supporting industry organisations, festivals, groups and individual artists by investing public sector funds to stimulate and strengthen the sector. (Arts Queensland, 2010)

As good as this might sound, Arts Queensland realistically acknowledges that the state government can't go it alone in building such diversity across the arts sector. Hence the focus on stimulating and strengthening the sector, a strategy which involves encouraging a mix of support from all levels of government, and also the private sector. Specific initiatives have encouraged this mix, for example the Regional Arts Development Fund matches local government funding for choices made at a local level, ensuring that the artistic outcomes are encouraging local involvement and local investment. This government model of inspiring local investment was taken to a different level by successive Queensland Music Festivals after 2001, when Artistic Director Lyndon Terracini promised that the Festival would match local council investment in performances. For some Queensland towns and cities, this challenge has become very competitive over time, with some local investment increasing for each festival.

A mix of support

Although the commitment of governments at all levels is central to the current mix of performing arts across Queensland, the organisations in this study receive funding from a range of sources, at different levels and with varying degrees of ongoing security, from the relative safety of arts statutory authorities to the unpredictability of project funding.

Within the scope of this study, the arts statutory authorities are Queensland Performing Arts Centre and the Queensland Theatre Company. Their funding is administered by Arts Queensland on behalf of the Queensland Government. Queensland Theatre Company also receives recurrent funding from the Australia Council's AMPAG, as do the remaining resident companies, Opera Queensland, Queensland Ballet, and Queensland Symphony Orchestra. Other organisations with clear connections to government include Queensland government shareholding companies like the Queensland Music Festival and Major Brisbane Festivals (incorporating the Brisbane Festival), and infrastructure supported by Arts Queensland including – in Brisbane – the Queensland Cultural Centre and the Judith Wright Centre of Contemporary Arts in Fortitude Valley.

The Brisbane Powerhouse is supported by the Brisbane City Council. Redefining Places for Art explored in detail two of Queensland's major performing arts venues, the Queensland Performing Arts Centre in Brisbane and the Empire Theatre in Toowoomba, set in a context which also includes the Brisbane Powerhouse, and venues in regional centres, particularly those in Cairns. A number of small-to-medium organisations in Brisbane and regional areas were examined in detail, as were key mainstream and community festivals and emerging/ experimental and online activities.

Most of these organisations employ a mixed funding strategy. Among the resident companies for example, in 2008, Opera Queensland's total budget of $6.6 million comprised 34% in box office receipts, 12% from the private sector, 37% from Arts Queensland and 8% from the Australia Council through AMPAG (Opera Queensland Financial Statements, 2008).

TABLE 1: Breakdown of funding among major organisations included in this study

	2008		2009		2010	
	Arts QLD Funding	AMPAG Funding	Arts QLD Funding	AMPAG Funding	Arts QLD Funding	AMPAG Funding
Opera Queensland	$2,188,905	$547,028	$2,242,816	$560,704	$2,310,100	$577,525
			inc of 2% on 2008	inc of 3% on 2008	inc of 3% on 2008	inc of 3% on 2008
Queensland Ballet	$1,649,398	$418,492	$1,690,186	$428,954	$1,742,288	$441822
			inc of 3% on 2008	inc of 2% on 2008	inc of 3% on 2008	inc of 3% on 2008
Queensland Symphony Orchestra	$2,633,060	$4,757,079	$2,628,840	$6,615,690	$2,707,728	$6,793,00
			inc of 0% on 2008	inc of 39% on 2008	inc of 3% on 2008	inc of 3% on 2008
Queensland Theatre Company	$2,750,000	$687,554	$2,818,00	$704,743	$2,903,00	
			inc of 2% on 2008	inc of 3% on 2008	inc of 3% on 2008	

Of particular significance to Redefining Places for Art is the small-to-medium sector which is fundamental to Arts Queensland's determination to build a diverse and burgeoning arts sector which cultivates new audiences and creates employment opportunities for professionals associated with the arts. Arts Queensland's small-to-medium (S2M) program reflects recognition by the Queensland Government of the potential for smaller performing arts organisations to be "the engine room for innovation and creativity" by "fostering community engagement and participation, providing regional access and supporting the professional development and employment of artists and arts workers" (Arts Queensland, 2010). In 2010, this scheme provided almost $10 million across 45 such organisations, a fact which underlines the scope - if not the range - of engine rooms around the state.

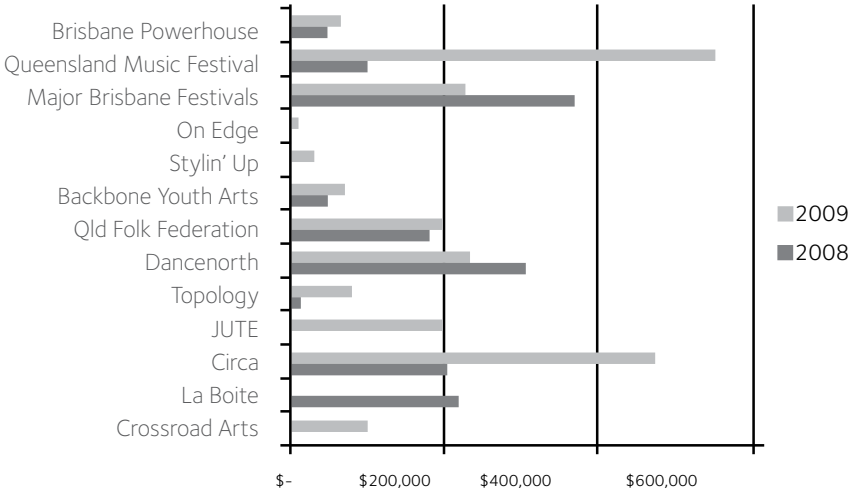
TABLE 2: Arts Queensland funding for S2M organisations included in this study

Organisation	Type of Funding	2008	2009	2010
Creative Communities				
Crossroad Arts	Annual rolling	$101,848.00	$101,848.00	$101,848.00
Queensland Folk Federation	Annual		$100,000.00	$100,000.00
Dance and Music				
Clocked Out Productions	Annual	$50,000.00	$50,000.00	$68,495.00
				increase 37%
Dancenorth	Triennial	$472,000.00	$486,160.00	$500,745.00
			increase 3%	increase 3%
Topology	Annual	$50,000.00	$50,000.00	$50,000.00
Theatre, Writing and New Media				
Circa	Triennial	$280,000.00	$288,400.00	$297,571.00
			increase 3%	increase 3%
Just Us Theatre Ensemble	Triennial		$195,700.00	$567,180.00
			increase 3%	increase 190%
Multiarts				
Regional Touring Services	Funding allocated for touring	$1,155,000.00	$1,155,000.00	$1,150,000.00

As effective as the Queensland Government's S2M program might be in encouraging development of the sector, it is not enough to sustain such breadth, and inevitably, other levels of government are also involved in the mix of funding. In addition to its support via the AMPAG program, the Australia Council has contributed funding to diverse activities through some S2M organisations, including Circa, Clocked Out, Topology, JUTE, Crossroad Arts, Dancenorth and other organisations. Small-to-medium festivals like Woodford Folk Festival, The Dreaming, the Laura Dance Festival and Stylin' UP, Straight Out Of Brisbane, 2high and On Edge also receive support from the Australia Council, combined with funding from Arts Queensland and/or the Brisbane City Council.

In regional Queensland, local governments support some cultural organisations and activities, a number of them through the Regional Arts Development Fund (to which Arts Queensland also contributes). Although they do not receive operational funding, other S2M organisations like Phluxus and Deep Blue have been able to access the regional touring fund, and have also received occasional assistance from Arts Queensland project funding for development and presentation of specific works.

TABLE 3: Australia Council funding for S2M organisations included in this study



Source: Australia Council for the Arts (2008b); Australia Council for the Arts (2009).

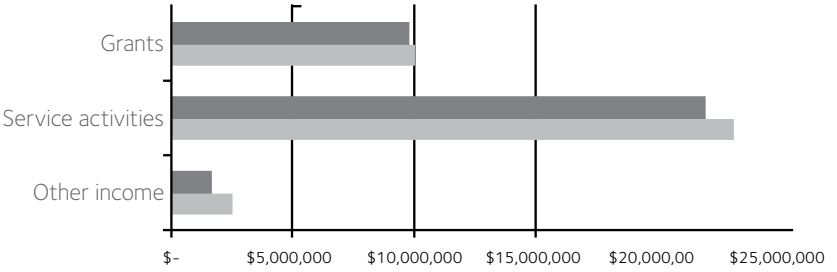
The various festivals in Queensland receive support from an even more diverse mix of sources than do the arts companies. In some cases, Arts Queensland is not the only government agency involved. For example, between 2008-2010, the annual community festival The Dreaming has received support from four government agencies: the Department of Premier and Cabinet ($100,000 per annum), Arts Queensland ($100,000 per annum), the Department of Communities ($25,000 per annum), and the Queensland Indigenous Arts Marketing Export Agency (QIAMEA), which has provided a reducing amount ($75,000 in 2008, $50,000 in 2009, $25,000 in 2010) resulting in an overall reduction in funding from the Queensland Government for the festival in 2010.

Because the Brisbane Festival has changed formats during the period examined by this study (2008-2010), a comparison across years is not feasible, except to note that in 2008 the total funding received by both the Brisbane Festival and Riverfestival was $5,180,000, and in each of the subsequent years to 2010, the combined festivals (now known as the Major Brisbane Festivals) have received $5,290,000, an increase of 2% from the 2008 total. Because it is a biennial festival, the Queensland Music Festival was presented only once during the period of this study, in 2009.

The 2009 Queensland Music Festival received $3,200,000 from the Queensland Government. Each of the other Queensland festivals in this study is funded individually on different bases, for example, the biennial Laura Dance Festival received $70,000 for the 2009 incarnation, paid in instalments over an 18-month period. Further, the regional component of Stylin' UP received funding from the Backing Indigenous Arts (BIA) program ($142,593 in 2008; and $147,407 in 2009), the increase of 3% on the 2008 amount possibly reflecting the growing reach of Stylin' UP as it has extended access with activities presented beyond its 'home' at Inala.

Annual reporting of the financial figures for the Queensland Performing Arts Centre highlight the potential volatility of even the largest budgets. In this case, reductions in a number of income sources, including grants, coupled with increasing expenses created a perfect storm for QPAC between the 2008 and 2009 financial years, resulting in a deficit in 2009, with a numeric difference of 35% from the surplus of 2008.

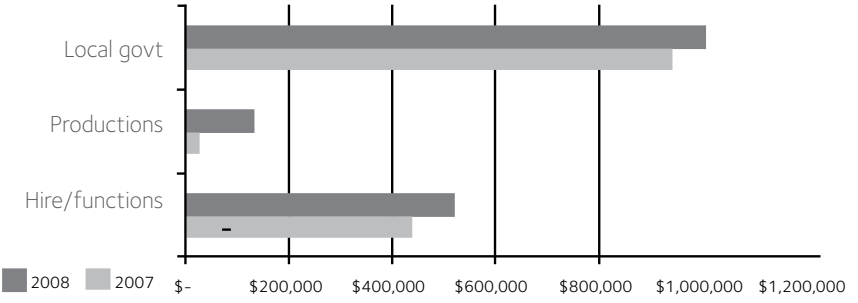
TABLE 4: Breakdown of income for the Queensland Performing Arts Trust 2008-2009



Source: Queensland Performing Arts Centre, 2009.

On the other hand, the Empire Theatre in Toowoomba has enjoyed more prosperity. While a direct comparison of the years 2008-2009 is impossible because in 2009 the Toowoomba City Council was incorporated into the Scenic Rim Regional Council, making the reporting different, a comparison of the years 2007-2008 gives some indication of the success The Empire Theatre was experiencing at the time.

TABLE 5: Breakdown of income for The Empire Theatre, Toowoomba, 2007-2008



Source: Empire Theatres Pty Ltd, 2008.

As these figures show, the mix of local, state and federal government investment in performing arts and cultural activities is significant. It provides the core funding for most activities without which many organisations would not be in a position to operate. The one obvious exception to this rule is the Empire Theatre in Toowoomba which, as a limited company managed on behalf of the local Council, enjoys a profit from its activities, and has a history of reinvesting that profit back into product development and presentation. Sharing of investment by all levels of government in arts and culture through funding models that combine grants with a diversity of other sources sets a foundation on which organisations might have confidence to build.

Statistics

One of the key challenges of *Redefining Places for Art* was to explore recent changes that have occurred in attendance across a range of Queensland artforms and venues. Statistical analyses of available quantitative data were undertaken to provide insight into the research questions regarding whether a shift in dynamics between artistic experience and place had occurred, and, if this was the case, to measure the scope of the shift and whether it might be attributed to particular audience segments, chiefly in relation to attendance patterns or profiles.

Quantitative data relevant to these issues was not readily available, especially reliable attendance data linking performance with specific venues. Although some of the arts organisations included in this report collect attendance data, these data are rarely comparable across organisations. Because reporting requirements for funded organisations vary across time and between agencies, annual reports and acquittal documents provide limited information. Further, from these data, little information can be derived about collection methods, and attendance figures are rarely correlated with details relative to location and facilities.

For many smaller organisations, inadequate financial, staffing and technological resources impede their capacity to collect and analyse detailed attendance data. Where data have been collected, changes to surveys over time and differences between collection mechanisms make trend analyses problematic. The ADVICE initiative currently being implemented by the Australia Council and Arts Queensland, which utilises Vital Statistix software, may address some of these issues, especially for larger venues. However, confidentiality will remain an issue when attempting to access data for research purposes. Although QPAC and the Brisbane Powerhouse have installed Vital Statistix software, at this stage the available historical data are limited. The Queensland Folk Federation has collected reasonably reliable survey data over several years of the Woodford Folk Festival. Consequently, it was possible to analyse data from the 2004/05 through to 2007/08 Woodford festivals for this report.

The peak body for the Australian live entertainment and performing arts industry, Live Performance Australia (LPA), regularly collects a range of national attendance data, but only for selected ticketed performance events. For example, self-ticketed festivals, the category covering many festivals examined in this study, are omitted from the LPA data. Only limited types of venues provide data, and regional venues have only recently begun to do so. Further, LPA does not provide raw data which might be correlated with specific venues, state-specific data, or socio-demographic data. Without access to raw data, analyses of these and other factors are not possible. Although LPA reports do provide some data analyses, they do not recommend multi-year comparisons or trend analyses because of inconsistencies in collection methods and allocation methodology.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) compiles a number of relevant reports including Attendance at Selected Cultural Venues and Events, Australia (4114.0) and Performing Arts, Australia (8697.0). These reports provide summary analyses based on the carefully designed General Social Survey (GSS), but they do not provide the original survey data. Since 2002, the GSS has collected information every four years from persons aged 18 years or older about their attendance at cultural events during the twelve months prior to each survey. Redefining Places for Art retrieved and analysed raw data or confidentialised unit record files (CURFS) from the 2002 and 2006 surveys.

Although ABS survey data are not linked to specific performing arts venues they do provide a representative overview of audience attendances at selected types of cultural events. These data are based on population surveys rather than venue or organisational surveys. Analyses for this research concentrated on ABS data from Queensland, but also included comparisons with other Australian States. Whilst this approach provides a comparison of attendances in 2002 and 2006, analyses of additional research data would be necessary in order to investigate attendance trends.

Using the ABS categories of cultural events related to the performing arts, *Redefining Places for Art* sought to identify any shifts in reported attendance figures across six relevant categories: classical music concerts, popular music concerts, theatre performances, dance performances, musicals and operas, and 'other performing arts' (including circus, revue, pantomime, comedy, and performance art). Attendances at musicals and opera performances were separated to isolate any potential differences between the artforms. Because there were too few attendances for meaningful statistical analysis, opera was subsequently omitted.

Whereas certain categories like classical music concerts and opera might be more likely to be associated with conventional venues this is less likely to be the case for other categories, especially theatre and dance where both contemporary and traditional work might be associated with a range of venues. The ABS data do not include festivals as a separate category, but, where comparable data were available, comparisons were made with attendance figures from Woodford Folk Festival. Although these data present difficulties in analysing shifts between performance and place, it is possible to explore demographic and socio-economic factors affecting attendance which might account for changes among audiences, especially Queensland audiences.

Previous research in Australia and elsewhere has examined a range of factors that are believed to impact on attendance. Reports such as The Social and Demographic Characteristics of Cultural Attendees (Cultural Ministers Council, 2006), suggest that attendance levels differ according to demographic characteristics such as age and gender, (generally refered to as sex in statistics), as well as socio-economic variables like proximity to venues and geographical location.

For example, people with higher levels of education and higher incomes are more likely to attend cultural venues and events, and reasons given for non-attendance include lack of time, cost, problems with health or transport, safety concerns and reluctance to attend a performance alone.

In *Australia and the Arts* (2000), a report focused on motivations and/or barriers to attendance based on attitudinal data rather than behavioural data, Constantoura posits that such factors as age, income, level of education, proximity to venues and geographical location positively or negatively affects people's perceptions of the arts.

From the GSS range of core topics, a number of independent variables were identified as relevant to understanding the relationship between attendance and a range of socio-economic and demographic characteristics among the qualitative data collected in this study. They can be found in Appendix 9, which also includes details of the methodology used for statistical analyses. Each of the data sources provided different potentials for comparison: ABS GSS data from years 2002-2006 yielded comparisons of Queensland with the rest of Australia for consistent variables and artform differences; Woodford data from 2004/5 through 2008/9 provided categorisation by age grouping, gender, highest education level attained, and whether the participant was a volunteer or not; ABS GSS and Woodford data combined yielded comparisons between the two sets for the year 2006 only; and QPAC and Brisbane Powerhouse data provided attendance trends by artform.

Actual reasons for attendance are not available among the data from the General Social Survey, Woodford, QPAC and Brisbane Powerhouse, so interpretations of the relationships between variables in the following section were inferred from qualitative research findings during this study and previous research, including The Social and Demographic Characteristics of Cultural Attendees (Cultural Ministers Council, 2006).

Key Findings

ABS GSS Data for Queensland and All Other Australian States
Analyses of Queensland attendance figures between 2002 and 2006 reveal significant increases across all performing arts events, except for those in the 'other performing arts' category. These findings are similar to those for all other States combined, but with a number of significant differences. For example, compared with other cultural events, popular music in Queensland experienced the greatest increase overall, significantly higher than any other category. In all other States, popular music also experienced the largest increase in attendance, although without the high spike of difference evident in Queensland. Across the two years, increase in the attendance rates for musicals were also larger in Queensland compared to the same category in all other States.

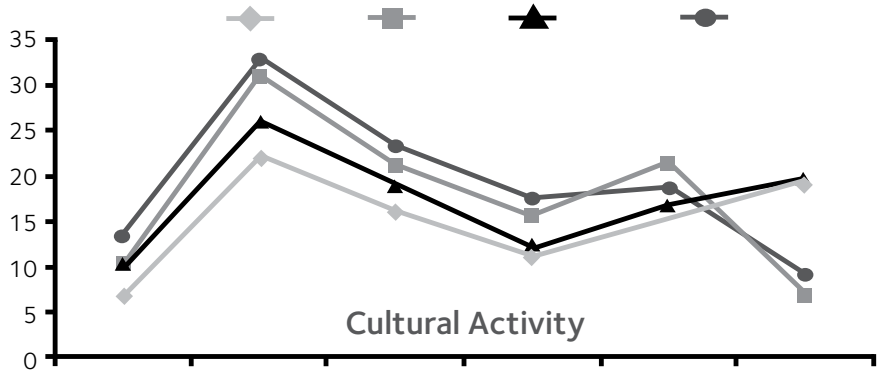
TABLE 6: Percentage Attending cultural events in Queensland and All Other States in 2002 and 2006

Group	Year	Sample Size	Classical	Popular	Theatre	Dance	Musicals	Other
QLD	2002	1,855	6.8	22	16.1	11.2	16.3	19.7
	2006	1,793	10.2	31	21.2	15.5	21.2	6.8
	Change in percentage		+3.4	+9	+5.1	+4.3	+5	-12.9
	p value		0.0002	<0.0001	<0.0001	<0.0001	<0.0001	<0.0001
STATES	2002	13,636	10.3	26.2	18.9	12.2	16.6	19.8
OTHER	2006	11,406	13.3	32.6	23.5	17.5	18.7	9.3
THAN	Change in percentage		+3	+6.4	+4.6	+5.3	+2.1	-10.5
	p value		<0.0001	<0.0001	<0.0001	<0.0001	<0.0001	<0.0001

As is evident in Table 6, with the exception of those in the dance and 'other performing arts' categories, Queensland attendance figures display greater increases between 2002 and 2006 than do those for all other states. At variance with this trend is dance - for states beyond Queensland, dance displays a more significant increase in attendance figures in 2006 - and also the 'other performing arts' category in which both datasets display a significant decrease in attendance.

Despite these increases across most cultural events, Queensland attendance rates remain below those of all other States for every category, some differences more sizeable than others. Further, although it is not evident from the tables displayed here, all of the Queensland increases were greatest in major cities, followed by inner regional areas. Unfortunately, the data did not allow for connecting these data to place, so while they may show interesting patterns of engagement, the relationship to increasing audience numbers in festivals, for instance, cannot be identified.

TABLE 7: Percentage Attending cultural events in Queensland and All Other States in 2002 and 2006



In addition to changes in attendance rates for some cultural events between 2002 and 2006, there were a number of noteworthy differences relative to certain independent variables for Queensland and other Australian States. Whilst attendance figures for classical music decreased among the 18-29 and 50-59 age groups, there was an increase among the 60+ age group. Further, in Queensland, there has been a significant decrease in female attendance at dance events (from 74 per cent to 66 per cent), and theatre (from 68 per cent to 59 per cent). By comparison, in other States over the same period, theatre has experienced an increase in female audience, from 59 per cent to 62 per cent.

Considerable differences also exist between Queensland and all other States among the independent variables affecting each cultural event in 2002 and 2006. A comprehensive listing of the rank order of these variables according to importance is provided in Appendix 9, which provided the background to the following summary.

Comparing 2002 and 2006, the most significant variable in Queensland and all other States for classical music was SEIFA, an index of relative socio-economic disadvantage. Education, access to the internet at home, and age were the next most important variables related to classical music. For popular music and theatre in states beyond Queensland, a range of variables shared importance, but in Queensland the most important variables for popular music in 2002 were gender and access to the internet at home. For theatre in 2002, SEIFA, education and access to the internet at home were important. By 2006 however, in Queensland the most important variable for both popular music and theatre was level of education.

In the case of dance, age was the shifting variable in Queensland: whereas SEIFA and education were the most significant variables for attendance in 2002, they were replaced by age in 2006. Yet age was not at all important to attendance at musicals. As with other artforms, in both years SEIFA was the most striking variable for states beyond Queensland, but in Queensland age was the only consistent factor across the years for musicals.

The statistics from 2002 show that for the 'other performing arts' category, education and gender were the most relevant variables in all other states, whereas in Queensland, gender was the most important variable defining attendance. By 2006, SEIFA had become the most striking variable for all other States, and the most significant variables in Queensland were education and access to the internet at home.

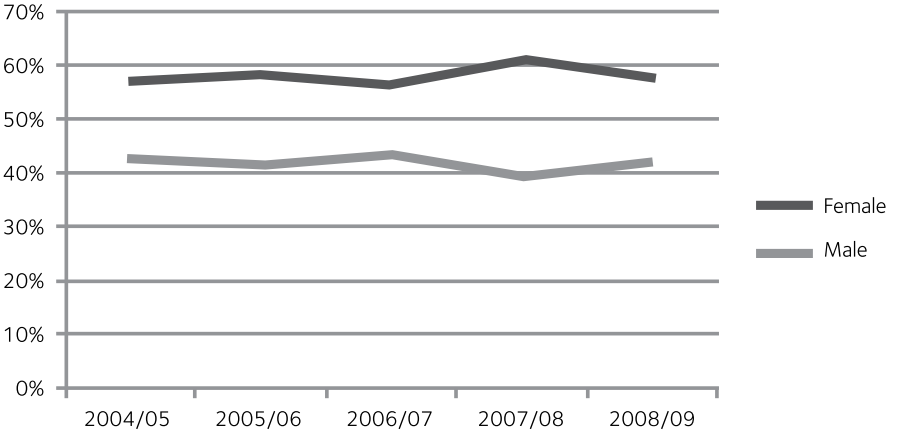
It would be of great value to creators, producers, and funders of the performing arts to be able to relate back data to place, enabling much more finely grained marketing and social inclusion strategies to be developed and implemented.

Woodford Folk Festival Data

Of the specific performing arts providers explored for Redefining Places for Art, only one produced data which could be linked to place over an extended time period. Data from the Woodford Folk Festival were analysed to examine possible attendance trends across its festivals which occurred between 2004/05 and 2008/09 in Woodford, one hour north of Brisbane. Further analyses of the 2006 data were conducted to explore comparisons with the cultural event categories used in the ABS General Social Surveys across corresponding independent variables including gender, highest educational level attained, age group, and volunteer participation. Whilst they may have proven useful for socio-economic analyses, variables related to occupation and income were not consistent across these studies, rendering findings inconclusive.

Curiously, while appreciably more females than males were surveyed across the years at Woodford, the data sets reveal no significant trends for gender. Conversely, the gender distribution in the Woodford data from 2006 did vary significantly from that in the Queensland ABS GSS data across all cultural events in the same year.

TABLE 8: Woodford attendance pattern across years for gender

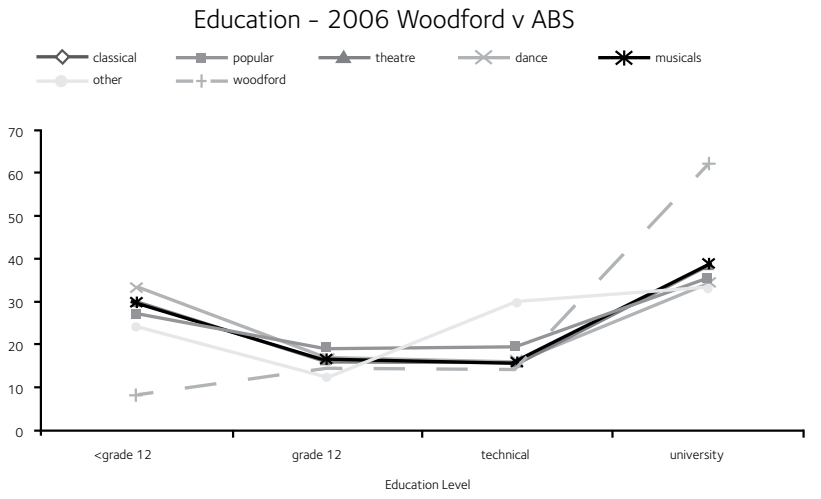


Total sample size: Female 7,439; Male 5,367

ABS GSS Data: Queensland 2006

Significant differences emerged from the comparisons of variables related to education levels in the Woodford 2006 data and the equivalent Queensland ABS GSS data. The most noteworthy of these disparities coincide with the extreme ends of the education spectrum: in 2006 Woodford had a significantly lower percentage of attendees with less than Year 12 as their highest education level, as well as a significantly higher percentage with a tertiary education.

TABLE 9: Audience distribution across levels of education: Woodford v ABS, 2006 Queensland



Note: The figures in Table 9 are not percentage attendance of each education class or grouping; they are percentage of the audience within each education class.

Among those data related to volunteer participation, discrepancies exist between the ABS GSS and Woodford data sets. The ABS GSS data include a volunteer participation variable, whereas Woodford includes only those data relating to whether a participant was a volunteer at that specific festival. Consequently, comparisons between these variables are not possible. Nonetheless, among Woodford attendees, there is a significant relationship between volunteer status and age, with the 18-29 age group more likely to be attending Woodford as volunteers than participants from other age groups. This same age group was also the largest cohort attending Woodford Folk Festival across all years between 2004/05 and 2008/09. When comparing data sets for 2006, the percentage of people from this age group attending Woodford was 41.14%, significantly exceeding all other ABS GSS cultural events in the same year.

QPAC and Brisbane Powerhouse Data

Redefining Places for Art examined Vital Statistix data for attendances at QPAC and the Brisbane Powerhouse, but analyses were compromised by inconsistencies in the years available for each venue and artform coding. There were also gaps in the data available because each venue experienced periods of closure for renovations.

Interpretations

Based on data from the ABS GSS, Woodford surveys, QPAC and the Brisbane Powerhouse, the key findings outlined in the above section result from analyses of attendance data from selected performing arts events over the previous decade. Whilst quantitative data have provided some insights into demographic and socio-economic factors that influence shifting trends among Queensland audiences, the extent to which this report might answer the research questions by drawing on statistical data is limited by the content and method of collection of available data. Therefore, findings from previous research and qualitative data collected during this study have been used to provide limited inferences regarding motivation for attendance at particular venues and events.

Clear findings from this research highlight changing attendance rates across cultural events between 2002 and 2006 in Australia, and especially in Queensland. It is evident that Queensland has experienced the greatest increase in attendance rates across most cultural events except dance and 'other performing arts'. Whilst attendance in the 'other performing arts' category has increased in other Australian states, this has not been the case in Queensland. On the other hand, popular music has experienced the greatest growth of the cultural events across Australia (and more significantly in Queensland), approaching cinema attendance rates of 66.8 per cent.

Queensland's attendance growth may possibly be related to a rapid increase in population, primarily the result of constant migration from other States throughout the past decade. Attendance rate increases might well be attributable to this sustained migration and subsequent shifts in population characteristics and age distributions, although further analyses would be required to confirm such a relationship. There may also be a connection between the growth of popular music in Queensland and other States and a parallel increase in attendance at festivals. While Woodford data confirm a consistent increase, analysis of additional festival data would be required before making wider interpretations.

What is more difficult to interpret is the shift in attendance rates for the 'other performing arts' category evident in Queensland. In 2002, attendances for this category which includes circus, revue, pantomime, comedy, and performance art, represented the second highest rate of attendance in Queensland and other Australian States, with only popular music achieving higher numbers. Although this remained the case for other Australian states in 2006, it was different in Queensland, as theatre, musicals, and popular music experienced significantly higher attendance rates than did the 'other performing arts' category. Interviews with personnel representing arts organisations suggest that considerations like venue programming decisions, especially in the major cities, may adversely affect some artforms (one example being contemporary circus), but without differentiated data for individual artforms in this highly diverse category, this cannot be confirmed.

Other research has consistently found that attendance levels differ according to demographic characteristics such as age and gender, as well as socio-economic variables linked to geographical location. Although SEIFA and education were consistently found to be significant in relation to attendance for other states across most cultural events, the pattern was less clear for Queensland: SEIFA seems to have become considerably less important for Queensland attendances. Classical music was the only remaining cultural event where SEIFA retained its significance in 2006. This shift may be partially attributable to Queensland experiencing decreases in the percentage of areas in the lowest SEIFA decile as a result of economic growth.

Remoteness appeared to have a closer relationship with attendance for some artforms in all states beyond Queensland. This variable is linked to popular music attendance in Queensland in 2002, but does not appear to be relevant to any artform in 2006. The very small Queensland figures available from the ABS data are the most likely reason for this finding.

For all cultural events except dance, education appears to have become increasingly important between 2002 and 2006, which may be attributable to changes in population characteristics as a result of migration. To some extent, these findings confirm earlier analyses by O'Regan and Cox (2002) and others, that level of educational attainment is the most important variable associated with attendance at classical music events. O'Regan and Cox argue that this is true regardless of geographical location although availability of venue, especially conventional venues (and availability of associated cultural events), have also been shown to affect attendance outside major cities.

Earlier studies, including that by O'Regan and Cox based on previous ABS GSS data, have suggested that popular music attendance is related to gender and age, but education has no effect. However, in this study, education appeared to be important to attendance at popular music events in all other States for both 2002 and 2006.On the other hand, in Queensland, gender and age were not significant predictors of attendance, but by 2006, education had become important to attendance at popular music and all cultural events except dance.

The Queensland shift could be attributed to changing age distributions as a result of migration, although further analysis would be required to confirm this assumption. It may also signify changing preferences, as O'Regan and Cox suggest that professionals and managers are attending a wider range of cultural forms (2002, p.165). This interpretation may also explain the significance of the education variable to other Australian States, an effect not previously evident. There may also be some association with particular festival events in Queensland and other Australian States.

Although 18-29 year olds are the largest age group attending the Woodford Folk Festival, it also attracts a more highly educated cohort than do other cultural events, and this may imply a correlation with higher occupational status.

Overall, the socio economic and demographic variables examined in this study provide valuable data to enhance our understanding of where shifts in cultural attendance have occurred. They show how Queensland audiences are changing over time in relation to audiences in other Australian States. They also provide insight into some of the key demographic and socio-economic factors affecting attendance. Population changes resulting from considerable trends in migration, especially from other States and most notably New South Wales, may be driving some of these changes. Analysis of more detailed and consistent data is critical to expanding this understanding, which might in turn contribute to more effective policy decisions relating to place.

Meanwhile, while organisations gather data about attendance, there is little consistency among the various sets available. Some of the data may be sufficiently useful for individual companies when comparing their own activity on a longitudinal basis, but not being able to compare across locations, organisations and regions is a potential disadvantage to funding agencies and future planning. For that to become meaningful over the coming years, the *Redefining Places for Art* research has broughtto the fore a number of insights regarding the future organisation and gathering of statistical data.

As one of the few sources of multiple year data that is carefully designed and reasonably representative of the Australian population, the Australian Bureau of Statistics General Social Survey (ABS GSS) holds the greatest promise to provide valuable policy information on place and performance if a number of significant limitations are addressed:

- More nuanced analyses of audience trends by creating a greater differentiation in ABS data, separating artforms such as contemporary and traditional dance and theatre, and musicals and opera.
- Inclusion of festival data as a separate category, possibly with groupings by size and by location, including regional community festivals
- More detailed residential location data with additional categories to include suburban areas, and further breakdowns of regional areas to account for distances of only a few suburbs beyond the inner city lowering likelihood of attendance.
- More fine-grained detail about venues, including location and capacity.

As a second source, while this study accessed attendance data from venues using Vital Statistix, the ADVICE program had only recently been implemented by a small number of venues. Consequently, very few of these venues were able to provide historical data. Combined with coding inconsistencies, this meant that the available data was too limited for substantial analyses. Nonetheless, there remains potential for data collected by organisations to be made more useful for future research and comparisons if issues regarding confidentiality are addressed. Then Vital Statistix data might provide valuable attendance data linked to specific venues, especially for many of the larger cultural organisations.

Thirdly, data collected by smaller funded organisations might be made more consistent, and extend beyond limited attendance data to include venue information; This can be modelled on and supported by larger organisations, especially those using Vital Statistix or similar systems. Instruments like the annual survey conducted by the Woodford Folk Festival can also provide relatively reliable data. While this survey is currently primarily used to provide audience data for strategic planning purposes, the questions and data collection method might become a useful model for other festival events if adapted in size and approach. The resultant data could provide useful information not currently available to organisations, and for future research.

Finally, venues like QPAC, Brisbane Powerhouse and others in regional areas collect a range of attendance data linked to venue and geographical location. Were coding and data collection methods to be made consistent across such sets, accessing and analysing these data, in conjunction with a broader framework of behavioural and attitudinal data, would provide further insights into the relationship between audiences, artforms and venues essential to effective policy making. This could be achieved through a consistent format as part of the recurring reporting cycle to funding bodies.

As it now stands, it is unfortunate that neither statistical data nor the reports from funded performing arts organisations contain reliable data connecting factors like social, economic and educational status to attending performances in particular places. This makes it difficult to develop strategies and policies on the basis of quantitative data available to date. However, a qualitative analysis of the actions of creators, producers, funders and audiences may prove more revealing.

SECTION 2 Clusters and case studies

Introduction

In the examination of ways in which performance places interact with the ever-changing cultural dynamics of a city or region and its surroundings, the emerging metropolis of Brisbane and its relationship to the rest of Queensland provide a stimulating case study. Similar to other developing cities around the world, such as Rotterdam and Birmingham, Brisbane has not traditionally been associated with iconic artistic companies or landmarks. Nonetheless, with Brisbane's position at the centre of the fastest growing region in Australia, it has successfully positioned itself as an emerging centre for vibrant creative activity (Brisbane City Council, 2003).

The city centre of Brisbane has typically housed large conventional artistic venues specifically designed for 'high art', most of which are now located in a central cultural precinct on South Bank, across the river from the CBD. Whilst the rather bland concrete structures might not have facades symbolic of previous centuries, inside they are nonetheless modelled on nineteenth-century European cultural traditions, and have assumed a primary role of preserving and presenting cultural heritage. Meanwhile, around the river bend are cultural venues which are specifically designed to be more inclusive, such as the Judith Wright Centre of Contemporary Art and the Brisbane Powerhouse.

Beyond the city of Brisbane lies a plethora of places built or chosen for the presentation of performance. A range of smaller cousins to the conventional icons are scattered across the state; their varying sizes and capacities seeming to insinuate equivalent ranking in the order of their cities, towns and their communities. As icons by intent, they lie at one end of a long continuum of places for performance, the other end accumulating all those places not specified for performance but chosen by imagination, intention, or imposition to fulfill the role of staging one performance or many.

Faced with the challenge of representing the breadth of these places for performance, *Redefining Places for Art* selected seven clusters as illustrative of the various places for and their creators of performance. The choice of some case clusters emerged from examining the work of particular organisations; others materialised from exploring the parameters and potential of specific performance places. While not exhaustive of all options, this study has developed clusters of organisations and venues into categories representing various forms of performing arts experiences. In each of the clusters, one case study is explored in greater depth within the broader cluster of others to which it is in some way related.

Thus, the clusters examine Queensland Performing Arts Centre within the context of major urban and regional arts venues; Opera Queensland is featured among its collegiate flagship companies, all of them metropolitan; and the work of the Queensland Music Festival is the featured mainstream festival. The work of Circa is highlighted among that of small-to-medium organisations based in Brisbane; whilst JUTE in Cairns is the focus for a study of the small-to-medium regional organisations. In the community festivals cluster, Woodford Folk Festival is the featured study, and Straight Out Of Brisbane is highlighted among the group of emerging, experimental and online events.

Redefining Places for Art pursued these clusters by interviewing principal artistic and management personnel from the relevant organisations, through focus groups developed to test the data that emerged from these interviews, and by encouraging feedback from the original interviewees both in discussion and correspondence as the results were becoming apparent.

Other sources - including statistics, annual reports, and government documentation - were examined in conjunction with the qualitative data from interviews and focus group discussions.

The intent of the research was to better understand the reasons for choices of place, whether artistic or logistical, and to consider the various factors in these choices through the lens of the artists, the audience and the venue management, where relevant. In order to achieve this, artists and curators of work were asked about their vision for the artform and the work they create, their vision on place and space, and on the relationship to audience and communities. Audiences were asked about where they consumed performance arts, what they liked, their response to particular experiences related to place, and the elements of the experience that were important to them. Venue operators, and also management within artistic organisations, were invited to comment on their perceptions and experience of flexible use of places, the logistical elements — advantages and barriers, and any relationship those considerations have with economic outcomes.

Whilst adhering to this thematic framework, interviews and focus groups were loosely structured. In interviews, the questions were built around the stated themes, but tailored to each specific individual and their work, and there was an open-ended arrangement allowing individuals to explore the themes each in their own way.

In focus groups, the questions remained within the overall framework, but were shaped by the results which had emerged from the interviews. In that way, the focus groups were to some extent a measure of relevance and success of what the artists and venue managers were purporting to achieve.

Cluster 1: Key urban & regional arts venues

Queensland Performing Arts Centre
Brisbane Powerhouse; Judith Wright Centre of Contemporary Art; The Empire Theatre, Toowoomba; Riverway Arts Centre, Thuringowa

A variety of venues and approaches to artist-audience interaction strive to maintain tradition whilst still injecting 'more air' into performance spaces in Queensland. From the iconic Queensland Performing Arts Centre (QPAC) in the cultural precinct of Brisbane's South Bank to the diversity of new, smaller regional proscenium-based venues and refurbished conventional spaces like the Empire Theatre in Toowoomba; from the re-used industrial spaces like the Brisbane Powerhouse at New Farm, and the Tanks Arts Centre in Cairns to new arts hubs like the Judith Wright Centre of Contemporary Arts in Fortitude Valley, and moveable feasts like the Spiegeltent and the Q150 Shed, the performing spaces around Queensland serve their various audiences in many ways. With a central focus on the largest and arguably most iconic of them (the QPAC), this cluster also examines each of these alternatives in the context of how the artists and audiences react to them as places for performance.

Queensland Performing Arts Centre, Brisbane

When it was first opened in 1985, QPAC comprised the Lyric Theatre which housed 1000-2000 people, depending on the number of levels required, a Concert Hall for 1800 people, and the Cremorne Theatre, a flexible venue seating up to 315 depending on its configuration. In 1998 the Playhouse was added, seating 850. Although it does both, QPAC is more of a presenting house than a production house. Nonetheless, management are well aware of the potentials of their various spaces and have a very proactive approach to interaction with clients, helping them to choose the most appropriate venue at QPAC for their production. John Kotzas, the current Chief Executive of QPAC, knows the place inside out and is determined to ensure that his clients do, too. He sees his role and that of his team as thinking: "How can we construct a space that enhances that [audience-performer] relationship, for the minimum charge?" (personal communication, June 9, 2009).

Having a well developed respect for the effect of different spaces and the impact each might have on the audience, he explains his disappointment that companies limit their use of the Cremorne Theatre to an end-on proscenium theatre. "[It] is a totally flexible space,.. and not every performance should be end on!" He deplores an attitude he depicts as: "Let's just play end-on because we have a subscriber audience and so Joe Bloggs can always sit in seat 5B," but adds "it's about time we came out of that and [began to] think of how we can do things differently in a way that really excites people and stimulates them" (personal communication, June 9, 2009).

It is worth noting that this is a view not broadly shared among the major organisations, whose concerns about costs to a large extent rely on keeping 'Joe Bloggs' happy and the bump-in time to a minimum, effectively reducing any major change of configuration to the realm of dreams.

Extending the philosophy beyond the concrete walls, QPAC has produced some very effective work outside the venue. In his earlier professional work, Kotzas created the children's festival Out of the Box (OOTB), which continues to use the spaces in and around the building, outside and even in stairwells. Kotzas explains the philosophy:

> The architecture [of QPAC] is imposing and people are intimidated by it. Some performances don't fit well in a space, they're better outdoors. Some performances we wanted for free, and we wanted to create a festival atmosphere. ... It's the ambience, the access to multiple things, it's that general buzz. ... You want the audience to feel that. (personal communication, June 9, 2009)

Out of the Box performances are not only on the stairs and spaces inside the building, they are also held in created spaces, like the luminarium for Architects of Air:

Architects of Air from Out of the Box, 2010. Photo by Narelle Frottman, courtesy of OOTB.

Now a biennial event, Out of the Box invades the whole building. QPAC closes to everything else whilst the children take over. Kotzas says "the building does feel entirely different!" In focus groups, it was obvious that the audience agrees. "Out of the Box was great when the kids were little ...[there were] pirate ships and things all around the place ... we saw performances on the stairs and everywhere" (Focus Group B.4). 'Everywhere' includes bringing the outside inside with constructed 'outdoor' settings such as the Sand Song event for the 2010 children's festival illustrated below.

Sand Song from Out of the Box, 2010. Photo by Marc Grimwade, courtesy of OOTB.

Now working inside the box, Kotzas remains committed to using the venue in a diversity of ways. To complement and support the staggering of starting times for events inside the building, he has introduced performances in the spaces around entry points to the building: a World Music series in the outdoor Plaza on Friday nights in summer; live music performances 'on the green', a small space of lawn outside the lower entrance; and he has experimented with different styles of music using the Plaza space in different configurations, changing the staging, adding a dance floor, deliberately adjusting the interaction to fit the performance, and measuring the audience response to assist with future planning.

Such adjustments are akin to what he'd like to see happen inside the box, if only companies would think outside the conventional square. He likes the idea of reducing spaces in new ways:

> One of the things we did in terms of playing with space is to reduce the house down and also place some audience on stage. … You can create a space that allows for your requirements. It's interesting having an audience on stage because one audience sees the reaction of the other, and it triggers responses. (personal communication, June 9, 2009)

Acknowledging that no matter how much encouragement his staff might give an organisation, Kotzas accepts that ultimately it is their choice which venue they will use and how they will use it. Nonetheless determined that "it shouldn't be about price in the first place, it should be about experience," he declares: "If the experience is right, then the profit will reflect that." With their necessary focus on budget, some of the major organisations still find it difficult, or unwise, to act on such views.

Kotzas understands that the experience of place is a total one, and extends across all of the spaces within QPAC. He explains that there are two important elements in keeping QPAC at the top of its game: "the quality of performances and the quality of the experience your patrons have." Explaining the latter, he says

> From the moment someone engages with you to the moment they depart, you're trying to prepare them for that moment in the theatre. They arrive, and it's the ambience you create, the ease of access into the building … which sets their mood. (personal communication, June 9, 2009)

The experience of the QPAC audience seems to be generally positive. Most focus group participants acknowledged that going to QPAC created a sense of occasion for them, and to some extent this was related to the advance purchase of tickets and resultant sense of anticipation. Endorsing the words of many, one explained that "I go to QPAC for the big ticket events that you have to wait three months before your ticket is ready" (Focus Group B.2). Others admitted to dressing up for their visit to QPAC, one describing her ballet-loving daughter who "enjoys the festive feel of QPAC, and [she thinks] it's kind of special to get dressed up and maybe wear a tutu" (Focus Group B.3). In other focus groups more supportive of the smaller venues in Brisbane, people admitted to avoiding QPAC for that very reason.

For some audience members, QPAC implies a sense of status. This was particularly evident among regional focus group participants, and also among some young Indigenous women who participated in this study. Describing a visit to QPAC in words which illustrate cultural difference as much as reflect on the venue itself, one Indigenous participant said "The floors [are] carpeted and it was all beautiful. I was underdressed and […] it was all so beautiful and lit up. When we went to take our seats, it was like rows and rows of chairs and we went up levels. It was so awesome." Another of the same group spoke of an Indigenous performance in QPAC which roused pride in her cultural difference: "A big crowd made you feel very proud, seeing all these things that we've had so many years … being out there, being told" (Focus Group F).

The Brisbane Powerhouse

Established by the Brisbane City Council in 2000, "its vision inspired by the building itself ... a place that once generated electricity now generates creativity" (Brisbane Powerhouse Artistic Charter). This re-used industrial space has over the past ten years become one of the more vibrant arts spaces in the country. The variety and flexibility of the spaces in the Powerhouse allow many experiences at once — spectator, participant, diner, passing or static, individual or group. As playwright, actor and director John Kani writes, "There is something really special about performing in a reclaimed space such as this. For years this building has been serving the community by providing the city with power and now it continues to do so — once workers were shovelling coal here, and now it's a place to shovel words and generate thought" (quoted in Brisbane Powerhouse Artistic Charter).

Brisbane Powerhouse. Photo by Steve Griffin, courtesy of Brisbane Powerhouse.

Believing that "the mainstream audience is just the totality of sub-cultures," Artistic Director Andrew Ross aims to create an atmosphere which is inclusive, not "one scene which seems to be the property of one particular group or sub-culture" (personal communication, November 25, 2009). To do this, he has focused on the way the entire space works for the public, developing areas where people might congregate, "a place where you can sit down, where there is quiet space to spend on your own or talking to somebody, so it presents a lot of options for the way you spend your time." He wants people "to feel that this is a community space that you can walk into whenever you like, [without having] to make it a special occasion." Ross believes that by creating an environment "where artists work and mix and engage with audiences ... then things just happen". This appears to have occurred. With a diverse range of performing arts associated with the Powerhouse, the centre has created a profile which is to some extent unpredictable. "Interesting things emanate from a place that has an eclectic program like ours," says Ross, who makes a deliberate attempt to avoid promoting music by genre in the belief that "a place like this gives you an opportunity to invite people to experience things without the associations that normally go with [a specific genre] that might put them off" (personal communication, November 25, 2009).

The Powerhouse program features independent groups and companies creating theatre, dance, music, film and visual art. Ross has a particular interest in presenting contemporary work from across the Asia-Pacific region and this is reflected in support for the contemporary music ensemble in residence at the Powerhouse, Topology, and Brisbane dance ensemble Polytoxic whose work is a fusion of Polynesian and contemporary dance. Member of Polytoxic, Leah Shelton confirms that "the support of the Powerhouse has been really strong throughout our development as a company. It's been a launching pad for us in so many different ways, from our smaller grungy works to us doing our first actual theatre production. The support has been pretty phenomenal" (quoted in Turner, 2010, p.15). Ross explains such support for independent companies and artists by saying that arts centres have become more than simply presenters. "They've become the place where a lot of new and interesting work is produced. They've become players in the creative game, not just halls for hire". Consequently his goal is to create a context that gives people space, and at the same time to develop an audience "with an appetite for their work" (p.15). Such context does not escape the artists or audience; one artist participant in a focus group confirmed the value of "performing in that sort of environment where you've got a bit of character, you've got a bit of landscape." A member of the Powerhouse audience described how each performance "makes [the space] their own in each show" (Focus Group B.1).

With a contemporary focus, the Powerhouse attracts a young audience, and was therefore "the perfect venue" for Dirty Apple, a joint production of Backbone Youth Arts and Opera Queensland for the Queensland Music Festival in 2009 (refer Cluster 2). Having Opera Queensland on the premises, albeit in a very different form, shows the breadth of the demographic. Ross is resolute about maintaining accessibility, with a focus on attracting a younger audience to this industrial space. He struggles "to keep the place downmarket. Arts centres in Australia are traditionally upmarket, based on an assumption that's where their demographic is, and that's why young people don't go to them" (Turner, 2010, p.15). The involvement of Backbone Youth Arts and young artists creating the work was not necessarily a magic bullet for success, but it did serve the youth market largely through school attendances. One participant who took her classical musician son to Dirty Apple said that he didn't expect to enjoy it, but came away very impressed. An adult participant in a focus group said she went because "it sounded like it was very new and fresh … [not] like a performance that'd been put on a thousand times before" (Focus Group C.2).

Mindful of the public fascination with the structure itself, the Brisbane Powerhouse has presented work which draws attention to the building itself, and the performance space in particular, including Tanja Liedtke's award-winning dance work construct which was originally commissioned for the arts precinct at London's Southbank Centre and performed at the Powerhouse in July 2009. The promotional material describes construct as

> a sharp, rigorous, and curious look at the concept of 'building'. The performance starts with an empty theatre full of possibility - a space in which to construct. Concepts explored in construct include building, collapse, re-building, assembling, and disintegration. Effortlessly shifting between the physical act of building and the emotional construction of lives, Liedtke encouraged her dancers to explore with wicked humour the curious connections between building a home, life, relationship, and future. (http://www.ourbrisbane.com/whats-on/performing-arts/construct).

The possible flexibilities of the Powerhouse are considerable. On the one hand, there is the element of surprise that emerges from having an audience surface from a performance of Mozart only "to be confronted by the local indie rock band on the platform" (Ross, personal communication, November 25, 2009). On the other, is the opportunity to curate the whole experience across spaces in the Powerhouse. With some performance events, Ross attempts to enhance their potential with complementary activity around the venue, so that among those who are in the centre are those who have come specifically for one event, and others who come for a different reason, and "bump into" another performance.

Ross says it is inviting "people who come for one purpose to make a snap decision to engage with another." Building on the premise that "going to the arts isn't organising a party", Ross hopes he has developed a space where "you can come with ten of your friends … or just walk in [alone], … and feel that this is a space you can just wander into and feel absolutely comfortable" (personal communication, November 25, 2009).

The potential for socialising is one of the reasons Topology believes their residency at the Powerhouse has increased their audience base. Artistic Director Robert Davidson believes: "It's got one of the best cafes and one of the best restaurants in Brisbane, and that helps. It's got a great setting with the river there. People just come, they see the artworks, they can go and see some comedy for free on a Sunday and they might be in New Farm Park … the whole experience is really important and I think this is what we also need to [consider]. It's not just parking your car and walking in and sitting in a seat and going home again for a lot of people" (personal communication, December 15, 2008).

Certainly among the audience there was a strong endorsement of one participant's statement that "at the Powerhouse there is never any dead space!" Across a number of focus groups, the audience confirms Ross' approach. "Usually on Sunday afternoons I've been here … and there was a random thing after work — we just thought let's go see what's playing," said one. This kind of snap decision to which Ross alluded is not uncommon: "I've been here before thinking something will be on, but then I've ended up looking at photography or other exhibitions that are [here]." There were some who had "bumped into" a foyer performance or DJ before or after a performance, and the consensus of how sharing such unexpected experiences with others "opens you up to different things about the venue."

The element of surprise is part of the experience for many. "I saw some wacky and wonderful performances at the Powerhouse. I saw something with high-powered women in low rise jeans that I would normally have walked past. It was awesome," enthused one. Another described the 'whole experience' in the context of both Powerhouse and the Judith Wright Centre for Contemporary Arts: "This venue [Judith Wright Centre] and the Powerhouse put on a lot of different performances; different kinds of interesting performances. I don't go there expecting them all to be wonderful. I just go for the total, and I use the Powerhouse [for] the convenience of restaurants and bars" (Focus Groups B.1; B.2; C.2).

The Judith Wright Centre of Contemporary Arts, Fortitude Valley

A similar eclecticism and sense of spontaneity exist on a different scale at the smaller Judith Wright Centre of Contemporary Arts (the Judith Wright Centre, JMCoCA, or 'the Judy') not far away in Fortitude Valley. "It's a nice cosmopolitan setting here," confirmed one participant in a focus group held at the Judy. "It was interesting — the other night we were walking back [home] and there were some people performing in the window … it was interesting to stand out on the street and watch people doing a performance," explained another, amused at the twist. Like the Powerhouse, the Judy incorporates visual as well as performing arts spaces, although the audience message was that they are less integrated than is perceived to be the case at the Powerhouse. "Art is part of the performing space here, [but] it is [in] a different gallery", explained one participant. "It's very clinical," said another, "If I'm up here and waiting, I will walk around [to the gallery]" (Focus Group B.2).

Although close to the city, the Judith Wright Centre does enjoy a 'local' audience who are nearby residents. "We come because we can walk. It's close," explained one. In terms of accessibility, walking is an advantage for the Judith Wright Centre audience. "To be able to walk somewhere and still have the convenience of restaurants and bars [nearby]" is attractive and encourages unplanned attendance. As one 'local' said, "with venues like these, I'll see anything because it's a good experience. It's a great theatre, not too expensive, it's worth a ticket." Another agreed that when she lived nearby "I would potter on down" to see whatever was on. Parking at the Judy is an issue for non-local audience. The inner city parking options are few and, as one focus group participant explained "some people won't go to the theatre unless they can get handy parking." The notion of using public transport was not a popular one. Despite a stream of Brisbane City Council buses pouring past the Judy, focus group participants insisted that "the Judith Wright Centre [is] simply … not easy to get to" (Focus Group B.4).

Judith Wright Centre of Contemporary Arts, from Brunswick Street. Photo courtesy Judith Wright Centre of Contemporary Arts

The Judy's audience was attracted by the size of the performance spaces, and the fact that they were more informal, and intimate. "I love the intimacy of this place … it is more spontaneous," said one, and another compared a performance experienced at the Judith Wright Centre with the same show at the Empire Theatre in Toowoomba: "I saw Circa here in the front room … It is cool because you are right next to them performing. When they came off, you could talk to them … in the Empire, it wasn't as intimate. There weren't as many people to create that feeling of atmosphere. I think they had about 300 people" (Focus Group B.2).

Clearly, the crucial element in creating intimacy seems not to be the number of people present but the perceived density among them. If "you're sitting there and almost get the same experience as going to the movies", a performance has less effect on an audience. Instead, "at one of these places [like the Judy], it is much more intimate because … you can see it and breathe it and that brings you right into it." Being in a space "where you can see and feel what the [other] people are feeling" (Focus Group B.2) and where the audience are close enough to see the facial expressions of the artists, to be confronted by the drama, to experience the event almost as a participant rather than an observer are themes constantly reiterated about venues in this study.

Another participant aligned the Judith Wright Centre with the Powerhouse in terms of the diversity of opportunities available: "Both the Powerhouse and Judith Wright are brilliant for getting a mixture of international performers and picking up other musicians you don't know that are often local. You get a chance to see local people at the same venue as you see an international performer" (Focus Group B.2). This philosophy is in common with that of the Empire Theatre in Toowoomba, which encourages wedding parties to have their photos taken in the art deco foyer. The Empire is very welcoming. One audience member volunteered that she attends almost anything, "for the atmosphere," explaining:

> When I come here I feel welcome. I know a lot of staff, but there are a lot who don't know who I am and it's always nice to be treated respectfully. When you get into the theatre, the theatre is so beautiful and it's just a pleasure to be in that environment and whatever happens on stage is a bonus. (Focus Group G)

The Empire Theatre, Toowoomba

The Empire Theatre is a heritage-listed building originally built in 1911, and rebuilt in art deco style after it was destroyed by fire in 1933. It closed in 1972 and re-opened in 1996 after a controversial decision by Toowoomba City Council to restore the building. Because it is a historical building, there is a real sense of place at the Empire.

The foyer of the Empire Theatre. Photo courtesy of the Empire Theatre.

Local brides come to have their photos taken in the spectacular foyer, parties are held at the Empire, and tourists visit. The Empire is both a presenting and producing house. It offers various artforms, and is building audiences through the creation of a subscriptions series based on diversity. This overlaps with the building of audience loyalty. General Manager, Ann-Marie Ryan says "We're successful I think when our patrons are saying 'Let's have a night out at the Empire' without being concerned about what's on as long as they are seeing something" (personal communication, June 15, 2009).

The audience responds well to this diversity of programming: "It's not just dramas, not just music, there's a cross-section of almost everything you can imagine comes here," said one. Moreover, as has been evident in other cases, there is loyalty to the place, and a level of trust in whatever is on offer. Accessibility plays a role in that choice, as one explained:

> If you have to make an effort to go somewhere, you won't go, if you're not really into seeing it. But if it is very convenient and you know it's a different experience, you will try something different because it's not an effort … because you want to come to something that is local (Focus Group G).

The Empire Theatre, Toowoomba. Photo courtesy The Empire Theatre

Confirming that the holistic experience associated with a particular place is sometimes more important than the event itself, another said:

> I've been to a couple of shows here that were really crappy. But I always come back. The experience doesn't change, I still love it. I've been to a show where half walked out at half time, and I'm still here. That's provided entertainment as well, because we've discussed, wasn't that just horrendous? (Focus Group G)

A multi-space centre, the Empire has an auditorium which seats 1565, a flat floor space in an old church next door seating 380 when in theatre configuration, and a black box Studio which can seat 150 in tiered seating. Ryan is aware that the auditorium is very big, and would like to add the 480-seat heritage-listed theatre to the Empire stables for drama performances. However, there is community resistance to the cost of its restoration, just as there was before the Empire itself was restored and re-opened in the mid-nineties.

Audience comment on the possibility of a drama space such as this restoration might provide was strikingly neutral. With some describing the Studio at the Empire being suited for drama, others focused on the Shakespeare in the Park productions by the University of Southern Queensland. Did they need another theatre? "Not with Shakespeare in the Park!"

> [It's] a really different experience. It's outdoor, it blends in, with all the trees and our Toowoomba weather, it's an eerie thing sometimes, it's at night time and the big trees are everywhere and it really does get the atmosphere happening around it. It suits it. It's great. People who may not normally have gone to Shakespeare can take a picnic, a few bottles of wine, sit on the ground. It brings in different people. It has become the thing to do in Toowoomba. If you don't go to Shakespeare in the Park, you've missed out. Everyone talks about it. (Focus Group G)

The University's Shakespeare in the Park series began after a very successful tour from the Bell Shakespeare Company, presenting what one audience member considered "one of the best shows I've ever seen in Toowoomba."

> They did [Midsummer Night's] Dream, they were guys from Melbourne. It was raw, there was [sic] about six lights and the PA worked; we all sat on blankets on the ground. There were only 140-150 people a night. It was one of the best shows I've seen because it was just so clean and neat. It was outside but it was intimate outside. (Focus Group G)

Despite the popularity of Shakespeare in the Park, the Empire management do not see any tangible relationship between such popularity and ticket sales at the Empire. Ryan says they are perceived as quite separate. Although she has reduced the programming of Shakespeare in the Empire in recent years, "the connection between people seeing Shakespeare in the Park and us programming more Shakespeare is definitely not existing" (personal communication, June 15, 2009). Maybe the uniqueness of the place (i.e. the park) in this case is a setting with which the Empire is not prepared to compete, except perhaps in winter.

Like QPAC, the Empire is proactive in assisting with its clients' choice of space within the Empire complex (and in some cases, beyond). The spaces within the Empire are all well used. Whilst the local community may not have at first supported the restoration of the Empire Theatre, their strong loyalty has been gradually earned by current management.

Where it is able to influence the decision on choice of space for visiting or in-house productions, the Empire Theatre demonstrates some daring. In August 2009 management chose to present the touring drama *The Kirsk* in the small regional Oakey Cultural Centre, which was considered much better suited to the work than the available spaces in the Empire Theatre. Working on the principle confirmed by audience members, that "if I thought it was going to be a good show, I'd go anywhere," bus transport was provided to bring the city audience to the regional centre (as opposed to bringing the regional audience in to Toowoomba city, the more expected modus operandus). In this case, the journey was part of the experience: "The journey is as much a part of the event. We in the regions understand that — you actually immerse yourself in [the journey]," confirmed one member of the audience. There was very positive response to the experience from Toowoomba residents, one of whom said of the smaller venue: "I found it a really powerful experience. You really felt as though you were there, in the submarine" (Focus Group G). The same comments were made in focus groups in Cairns, of the same work as it was presented in the JUTE Theatre. It is worth noting that once again, it is the holistic experience, in this particular case, bus included, that is attractive.

In fact, whilst the notion of bringing Toowoomba to Oakey was relatively new, the Empire is acutely aware of the smaller regional centres around Toowoomba, and selects product which will be able to travel to the various spaces in Oakey, Dalby and Chinchilla. The *Kirsk* was so successful that Dalby and Chinchilla are buying into similar product to recreate the same experience in future programming. For the Oakey production, some audience members came from Brisbane, attracted by the 'bus plus performance' concept. Some Brisbane people to come to the Empire regularly. One Brisbane audience member described the reasons thus:

> I'm from Brisbane and I go to lots of things, all over the place. This place is very, very special to my husband and me. It has a personality all of its own. Also, the traffic situation, you have maybe a 10 minute situation at the end of it, compared to hours in Brisbane [at QPAC], which isn't very nice (Focus Group G).

The staff member responsible for reservations explained that, without advertising beyond Toowoomba, there is still significant interest in the Empire as an optional performance space:

> We have a lot of Brisbane patrons who ring us to find out when we are having a certain show here because they would rather drive to Toowoomba to see it than to see it in Brisbane. We do have a lot of patrons that ring and will have an outside address. We ask them if they know they are ringing Toowoomba, and they do know that. So there must be something they are experiencing that makes them come back. We do have quite a few repeat patrons from Brisbane and other areas, even the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast, travel to Toowoomba to go to the theatre, even though the shows are in Brisbane (Focus Group G).

Curiously, despite its large auditorium, another audience member drew attention to the intimacy of the Empire atmosphere:

> This is so personable, it is so lovely to come here and everyone who comes here says it on stage. I'm not exaggerating. Everyone says it is beautiful to perform here. That's what I like about it. You're front stage; you're right up there with them. You're not way in the back trying to see this little tiny person on the stage. It's a much more personable experience. I'm not a crowd person, I don't like big crowds and I don't like traffic. That's why I really steer clear of [QPAC] (Focus Group G).

Yet whilst the largish auditorium at the Empire complex is seen as 'intimate' in comparison to QPAC, there is a sense of relativity when compared to the Oakey experience already described. Audience comment focused on the 'closeness' which the Oakey Cultural Centre afforded *The Kirsk*, and the same people who thought the auditorium in Toowoomba 'intimate' under some circumstances were able to understand the different level of intimacy offered in the Oakey space. As one patron explained, "[with] drama for me as a patron, you really need to get in close, and *Kirsk* was certainly a piece you could immerse yourself in and you could really get in it. I find that difficult in this place [the Empire complex]" (Focus Group G).

In fact, one example quoted indicated that the size of the space might be irrelevant if the production is able to overcome the challenge of distance between audience and stage. Speaking of Bud Tingwell's one-man show *The Carer*, a drama about the experience of caring for one's spouse who passes away, one patron suggested that although she had expected it to be in the smaller flexible Church space instead of the auditorium, in fact "when it's [so] good, you lose the fact of being in such a big room" (Focus Group G).

The main auditorium of the Empire Theatre. Photo courtesy of the Empire Theatre.

There are other smaller spaces utilised by amateur companies in Toowoomba, and in discussion the patrons were not prepared to make comparisons between the non-commercial spaces and the Empire. Of the Arts Theatre, one audience member said

> You wouldn't compare because it's apples and oranges. It's a totally different experience. ... I love spaces with character, and that's sure got character. You creak in and climb up into your seat and try to duck the man in the lighting box to see the stage. That's all part of it. It's fabulous because the performances that are there are meant to be there. Most of them wouldn't transfer to here. It's meant to be. (Focus Group G)

As with QPAC, the Empire sees the holistic experience from arrival to departure as important to attracting and retaining audience. One of the audience members explained the advantages of the award-winning restaurant which leases space within the Empire complex:

> I find it really good to have a very up-market restaurant attached to the theatre, especially when you invite out-of-town guests. I invited my parents and ten of their friends to see a show last year and they stayed in Toowoomba. I've invited a lot of Brisbane friends and we always dine here because it's so convenient. It's a stepping stone. We've done the supper afterwards, been involved with coffee, or meeting people in the bar before. (Focus Group G)

The significance of the experience from car park to performance and back again is a common thread among all participants in this project, and those responsible for managing performance spaces are well aware of the fact that a performance is also a social gathering, where people take the opportunity to meet with friends and share the experience they've chosen to attend. "I like to have drinks beforehand, drinks after and pitch a complaint after the play," said one patron. Another was somewhat of an expert in the quality of bar service in most of Brisbane's performance venues, yet nonetheless was still very engaged with the artforms. Yet another explained in more detail:

> The experience goes beyond the performance, and extends to the social. All of the social elements — parking, connecting, eating, etc. extends the performance into a much more complex experience. The value of that experience becomes an imprint on [one's] lifetime experience. (Focus Group G)

The Empire's one-price policy in the Auditorium is also popular:

> Here it is one price, no matter where you sit in the theatre. You go to QPAC you pay big money for a really close seat. We went to see Cats [at QPAC] earlier this year and were sitting right at the back; I needed binoculars to see the people on the stage. No matter where you sit here, you can see and hear. (Focus Group G)

The Empire Theatre management is proactive in gaining audience involvement. It has an audience peer group, the Ambassadors, who assist in the choice of programming. The Ambassadors are proactive in bringing audience into performances that they have selected, making large group bookings and creating social events aligned with the performance. As one recipient of that kind of gesture said,

> I think the experience at the Empire is so quaint and gorgeous, with all the Friends of the Empire, everyone knows you and greets you. Where else do you get that? These people are so committed and we have so many of them. (Focus Group G)

Riverway Arts Centre, Thuringowa

Riverway Arts Centre, Thuringowa. Photo courtesy Townsville City Council.

Although both are major regional arts centres, there are few parallels between The Empire and Riverway Arts Centre in Thuringowa. Whereas The Empire Theatre was a major refurbishment of an ageing venue, the Riverway Arts Centre is a single part of a larger, staged development with purpose-built facilities. The original planning concept for the Riverway project was to inject recreational and arts spaces along eleven kilometres of the Ross River in Townsville, extending from Ross River Dam to Black Weir.

Riverway Arts Centre was established in the first stage, and runs along the river in a precinct which also houses 4,000 square metres of swimming lagoons on two levels, Pinnacles Gallery, a Riverwalk and Parklands among residential and commercial development.

Community consultation conducted by the pre-amalgamation Thuringowa City Council confirmed that the area lacked spaces for recreation and the arts, and the Riverway project was intended to address those needs. According to Glenn Arboit, former Manager of the Riverway Arts Centre, the development not only increased economic development and real estate pricing, but also "lifted the whole perception of Thuringowa" (personal communication, November 26, 2009).

The Riverway Arts Centre houses the La Luna Youth Arts company, giving the Centre a strong focus on youth, matched by the local demographic which Arboit claims has about 48% young people under the age of 27. Consequently, the Centre programs a lot of contemporary pop music, along with theatre and some dance. By linking music to the younger audience the Centre was, in Arboit's opinion, "getting some reasonable results." With black box flexibility, "you can do so many things", Arboit explains, noting that "it is a very intimate space", suited to contemporary music and physical theatre "where the action's going on right in front of you" (personal communication, November 26, 2009). Programming is different from the Townsville Civic Theatre, only twenty minutes away in Townsville City which merges seamlessly with Thuringowa, and the two different venues attract very different audiences.

Not only are the audiences different, but so too is their utilisation of each venue for amateur events. Arboit has not seen the more traditional local users at Riverway as yet — the amateur opera, choral societies and little theatres, all of which favour the Civic Theatre, probably because of its greater audience capacity. Some community dance schools have found the Riverway space easier to use, and lower in cost. During his time as manager, Arboit tried to "keep pricing very reasonable so that certainly [wasn't] going to be used as an excuse not to come" (personal communication, November 26, 2009.

Despite the proximity to the swimming lagoons, the Riverway Arts Centre has yet to find a way to attract the crowds who come not for the arts but to swim nearby. Getting them to come through the glass doors of the Centre "and let it all soak in ... is more difficult to do" (Arboit, personal communication, November 26, 2009). Not that there haven't been attempts: Riverfestival was an early endeavour to capitalise on the Townsville 400 V8 supercars event. "That was about getting people in on the site and experiencing every aspect of what we were about" said Arboit.

Describing entertainers, fireworks, performances in the Arts Centre, barbeques in the grounds and swimming in the Lagoons, Arboit summarised a promoter's heaven on the river bank which attracted about 100,000. "I've no doubt that people came to [the performances] because of the bigger hype of the festival, saw that and certainly would have related it to the ongoing programming," he said. "And I've got no doubt that they would have come back to experience more comedy perhaps and more music" (personal communication, November 26, 2009). Whether they did or not, there is a constant struggle to attract audience across the city. Even though it is a regional city, the ethos of the regional audience does not extend into the regional city. Whereas the journey might be expected in Blackall or Oakey, in Townsville they say the Riverway Arts Centre is "too far away .. we just don't go over that way" (Arboit, personal communication, November 26, 2009) when in fact it's likely to be a maximum of twenty minutes from anywhere in the greater city of Townsville.

Karnak Playhouse, Daintree

By contrast, people will drive for more than an hour from Cairns to attend performances at the privately-owned and managed Karnak Playhouse, a spectacular amphitheatre near the Daintree National Park. Actor Diane Cilento opened this "inspirational concept of theatre as a complete experience" in 1992 after having discovered what she considered "the most beautiful unspoilt land that I'd ever seen in my life" (personal communication, June 10, 2009). Cilento and her playwright husband Tony Shaffer re-created the concept of a Greek amphitheatre in the rainforest, using man-made elements to enhance the natural features of the place: copper around the stage to assist the natural acoustic, and a lake "because sound is carried by water in the most extraordinary way." The audience responds to the space in a way not possible within a traditional setting. "It's like a sort of Spanish passagio. They walk up and down and talk to each other … and walk down to the lake. …The barrier goes down because they are watching a performance and they can say, 'what did you think?', 'what did he say?'…It opens them up a bit" (personal communication, June 10, 2009).

Karnak Playhouse. Photo by Karen Trist, 2009.

Before Karnak opened, there was "absolutely no entertainment anywhere" around Cairns, according to Cilento, who acknowledges the emergence of JUTE and other companies since. "People used to, and they still do, drive up from Cairns," explains Cilento, adding that many films have been made in the area, and whilst it "sort of feels as though it's the end of the line, … it isn't." For a time, there was a little cane train delivering champagne-prepped audiences through the canefields to Karnak, but regulations put a stop to such enjoyment:

"They can't have that much fun, you know!" comments Cilento drily (personal communication, June 10, 2009). The long line of performances and organisations that have been through Karnak is impressive: Shakespeare, comedy and international artists like Judy Garland's daughter Lorna Lufte "who's got the biggest set of lungs in the world!" Karnak is also a touring venue for JUTE from Cairns. Because of the dimensions of the amphitheatre, works are often modified to fit the space, and some of Cilento's own adaptations have travelled to Townsville, although she admits that some modifications won't travel easily. A production of Carmen which "threw out the set and had some benches" among the audience was very popular, and Cilento admits that she thinks "after they'd been here they threw it out altogether" (personal communication, June 10, 2009). Her original dream, that of using the Karnak space to develop creative work that might then tour the world, will happen for the first time in 2010 when Cilento performs Peggy Guggenheim's one-woman play, Woman Before a Glass, first in Karnak, then on tour around Australia and then in London (personal communication May 17, 2010).

Karnak is a special space which attracts audience for the experience of place as much as for the performance itself. Audiences "love the ambience because they're inside but the stars are there and the moon's coming up and the ducks are squeaking and the cane toads are chirping and the bats are flitting. It's a sort of eco-tourist theatre in that it's a whole experience" (Cilento, personal communication June 10, 2009). Cilento believes that Karnak appeals because "you're not in a stuffy theatre with other just other people coughing around you, you're in the middle of the night with just a bit of a sail over your head." Yet the audience treats the venue with great respect. "People don't come to this theatre really looking bad." Many of them dress up, making a special event out of the whole experience. Cilento believes it is because the audience has to plan the journey that they make this effort.

Returning to the Greek image, she describes that 'whole experience': "You eat, you listen, you look, and you don't have to worry about parking, you don't have to worry about whatever, and then you go away and you've had an evening of delight, hopefully" (personal communication, June 10, 2009). This opportunity to socialise which is so integral to the Karnak experience is one that resonates across many of the case studies explored in this project.

The Spiegeltent and the Q150 Shed

For his 2003 Queensland Music Festival, Lyndon Terracini introduced Australians to the Spiegeltent, the 'flagship' of touring tents, lined with mirrors and stained glass, in keeping with more than a century of European tradition in form and presentation. Terracini used the Spiegeltent in many ways — for entertainment, some of it popular with audiences, and some which challenged them. The tent was about access on many levels: not only the place for experiencing new artistic product, but also the place for discussions about the arts, for listening to directors and curators speak about their artistic work and answer questions from the audience. In its first incarnation, the Spiegeltent was one of the great hits of the festival, much anticipated in subsequent programming. It has since found its way also into the Brisbane Festival and others around Australia.

Like any touring tent, the Spiegeltent has moved location around the city for each of the festivals it has visited; from South Bank, to King George Square, to Queen's Park, all within the centre of the city. The latter incarnations have been somewhat less successful than the first, prompting the question of whether the reason might relate to the location or the programming. However, in focus groups, patrons spoke of looking first for where the Spiegeltent would be located, and arranging their festival diaries around that (Focus Group B.4).

The Spiegeltent at Queen's Park, Brisbane Festival 2009. Photo by Marc Grimwade Photography, courtesy of Brisbane Festival.

Thus, the Spiegeltent, whilst not connected to its audience historically, is the conduit that connects them to whatever festival it might visit. It was the success of the Spiegeltent as a destination as well as a place for performance that inspired the idea of a touring tent, to reach regional Queenslanders. In 2009, the state of Queensland celebrated its 150th anniversary.

Among many forms of celebration that took place over the year was the Q150 Shed, a 'spiegeltent' in true Queensland style, modelled on a traditional shearing shed. Like the original Spiegeltent, the Q150 shed is round, but without the glass and mirrors. Instead, like the traditional shearing shed, it is made of corrugated iron, with open 'windows' around the top of the structure. From June to December in 2009, the Q150 Shed toured around coastal and outback Queensland, bringing performing arts to communities in Mount Isa, Cairns, Townsville, Mackay, Rockhampton, Maryborough, Caboolture, Blackall, Augathella, Cherbourg, Warwick, Brisbane, and the Gold Coast. Like the Spiegeltent in Brisbane, the Q150 Shed was very popular with audiences. In Blackall, focus group participants expressed disappointment that it was only in town for a weekend. They were fascinated by the concept: "It felt kind of novel going to this," said one, "being like a shed, like a shearing shed", with performers inside and outside. A small-scale replica of the iconic Isis Downs shearing shed, the Q150 Shed had multi-dimensional appeal — historical, structural, visual and cultural elements all drew people to it. One of the least 'arty' participants who admitted to only attending those events in which he was involved was captivated by the idea. "What was it? Ten-sided, or sixteen-sided, or...? It was awesome! really good, it had a lot of feel to it."

The Q150 Shed at Mt Isa, 2009. Photo courtesy of the Queensland Government.

Admitting that the appeal was largely due to the 'shearing shed' model, some participants declared they might not otherwise have gone to see what all the fuss was about. One followed it to Warwick, some 780 kilometres away from Blackall, because "it was a crazy, crazy atmosphere inside", although there was general agreement that it was also "pretty steamy" inside, but that's the way the old shearing sheds were! (Focus Group A.1)

Putting a regional flavour into the touring tent concept was clearly a success in attracting regional audiences, even those who would not otherwise find appeal in visiting arts events. In the case of the Q150 Shed, focus group participants were less interested in the arts within, and in fact, not all recalled what they had seen, except for that "ten-sided, or sixteen-sided" tent!
Overseeing the reactions from and to the key urban and regional arts centres, the insights gathered for this cluster suggest that venues of this kind are well aware of the potential for creating an experience which begins before arriving, and lasts well beyond the curtain fall.

Audiences are excited by being drawn into the experience, whether it is by the setting in which the performance occurs or through socialising with others before and after. Places for performance fall along a continuum of possibilities, relative to their size and capacities (onstage, backstage, in the stalls and beyond), and audiences tend to categorise them by profile and their own preferences. Among those many organisations which produce work inside these venues, these factors are significant.

Cluster 2: Flagship companies

Opera Queensland
Queensland Ballet, Queensland Symphony Orchestra, Queensland Theatre Company

While being funded more substantially than most other arts organisations, the category of providers commonly referred to as 'flagship companies' have to tread a narrow path between tradition, audience expectations, and the need to meet budgets. This often results in a balancing act between catering to the (sometimes overly) familiar on one hand, and niche and emerging interests on the other. This applies to repertoire, production, and also to giving meaning to existing and emerging spaces. Looking for new ways to create currency in their work, some companies turn to moving outsude their conventional places of performance. Others find compelling reasons to stay inside.

This cluster examines the way in which Opera Queensland in particular interacts with performance places, explored in the broader context of other flagship companies in Queensland. While there are some family likenesses among them, each artform brings with it specific demands on place, which in turn tend to amplify any distinctions between the relationships each organisation necessitates with the places in which they perform.

Opera Queensland

Opera Queensland has a multi-stage program which takes the company into a wide variety of different places for performance. Their mainstage program is set in the Lyric Theatre (QPAC), the Queensland Conservatorium Theatre, and the Concert Hall (QPAC) in Brisbane. Productions for smaller stages in regional centres are either reduced or chosen specifically with those settings in mind. The company's outreach program might see it perform in outdoor or alternative settings, including canefields. For education performances, Opera Queensland may present in classrooms or outdoor spaces, depending not only on what the school has available, but also other logistical considerations like the weather.

The art presented is primarily traditional, although there are some occasional moves into contemporary work, mainly in recent years. Particularly notable is the collaboration with Backbone Youth Arts to present Dirty Apple at the Powerhouse as part of the Queensland Music Festival in 2009. As noted earlier (in Cluster 1), this new commission used very young non-traditional artists in its creation, production and performance. It also involved technology in its presentation, an innovation which is increasingly more common in this artform. Artistic Director of the Queensland Music Festival, Deborah Conway said of the work that it "was such an interesting piece for me because it took this age-old form, opera, and twisted it so that it started to appeal to an entirely different generation" (personal communication, November 11, 2009). Sitting among school students in a matinee performance at the Brisbane Powerhouse, Conway thought they did not realise they were listening to opera. "They were completely engrossed in the plot, they were involved in all the nuances going on onstage, they were immersed in the sets, they were taken away by it — it was speaking to them" (personal communication, November 11, 2009).

Chris Mangin (Opera Queensland) says of the company's choice of venue for this opera:

> This year is the first time ... that we've gone to the Brisbane Powerhouse. .... I looked around at the venues which have youth attachments, ... and there really are only two of significance. There's Metro Arts (which is too tiny, we can't do work in there because of its size) and there's the Brisbane Powerhouse, which at least gives us a 500 seat venue. (personal communication, January 22, 2009)

Conway considered the venue "perfect" for the work, "because it does frame this opera in a completely different way". "Opera is always seen in [a place] that is heavily subsidised, the money's in the costumes, it's all about the sets, the stories are old and irrelevant to us," Conway explains. "But [Dirty Apple] offers a very different way to approach a new generation of potential opera goers, and it was completely liberating" (personal communication, November 11, 2009).

Dirty Apple, at the Brisbane Powerhouse. Photo by Rob Maccoll, courtesy of Opera Queensland.

Although the Powerhouse is seen to have 'youth attachments', Mangin does not see youth as risk-takers in artistic matters.

> Strangely enough, that audience (post-18, once they've left secondary school) — everyone says they're the adventurous group. They're not. Generation X and Generation Y by and large have the same conservative attitudes as their parents and that's very surprising. The risk takers are normally older members of the audience. With a younger audience, the social experience is almost equal in importance to them as the cultural experience they're about to have. (personal communication, January 22, 2009)

According to Mangin, the choice of the Powerhouse was directly related to the production. Interviewed before the performance, Mangin explained;

> We've priced it in such a way that there's no real economic barrier to coming. We want as many young people to see Dirty Apple [as possible] — young people and people that engage with young people. (personal communication January 22, 2009)

Mangin professes an intention to continue to explore digital strategies. "The Board has made available reserves and initial investment for trialling certain things, to see how well they work," he explained. "That includes upgrading the interactive nature of our audience groups. The nature of how we do business has changed, and so the nature of how we present will change" (personal communication January 22, 2009).

Although Opera Queensland performs in many different places and permutations as community outreach, these are not usually part of its normal series programming. Even Dirty Apple was made possible by one-off Q150 funding.

Nonetheless, there have been some attempts to align place with performance. The choice to use the Queensland Conservatorium venue for at least one season each year, for example, has been deliberate, and this has meant that the work selected has in most cases been one that would suit the venue. It is noted by the company that the Conservatorium venue brings the action much closer to the audience. Whilst that effect can be confronting, it has been deliberately employed for that reason in such works as Fidelio, Hansel and Gretel and Rigoletto. These traditional works have been presented at the Conservatorium Theatre in performances that are not traditional in style. Chris Mangin notes that this nevertheless satisfies the audience expectations for "traditional operatic delivery" — that is in a house which provides a stage big enough to utilise a flying system and lighting appropriate "to that scale [of work]." He insists, "They are audiences of scales!" (personal communication, January 22, 2009).

With the 'new' production of Fidelio in 2009, Mangin wanted "a significant dramatic impact", as he had achieved with Hansel and Gretel in 2007. He explains:

> So I want the proximity that a venue like the Conservatorium Theatre provides, where the audience is much closer to the stage, in all respects, and so the impact of the drama of the piece is significantly greater. And that's [the same reason] why I put Turn of the Screw into that theatre. I wanted that sort of association — dynamic between the stage and the audience. (personal communication, January 22, 2009)

Fidelio, Conservatorium Theatre 2009. Photo by Rob Maccoll, courtesy of Opera Queensland.

Mangin believes that proximity makes the drama "much more immediate." He continues: "The acoustic is better. The acoustic in the Lyric is not as good. It's more brutal and a dry acoustic, for reasons that we now fully understand and regrettably are only partly addressed." For Mangin, the acoustic of the Conservatorium Theatre is well suited to younger, emerging talent. "Because it's a much more sympathetic space acoustically, I can provide opportunities for younger artists to strut their stuff, to be introduced to a public in a way that's not supported by the acoustic of the larger theatre," he explains. In a large theatre, "you need people who've learned their craft completely; [people who] are experienced performers" (personal communication January 22, 2009).

Opera Queensland notes that their audience doesn't like the Conservatorium venue as much as QPAC because the Conservatorium Theatre is less professional in its bar and service staff and does not have facilities equivalent to those at QPAC. According to Chris Mangin,

> The audience tend to see [the Conservatorium Theatre] as a university venue, and it doesn't have the sense of occasion or moment that going to the Lyric [Theatre] has. It's not staffed by professional staff, it's staffed by students, some of whom are quite good — some of whom are not. The training is not great. So, some of the creature comforts (food and drink, particularly) are not as good [as at QPAC]. (personal communication, January 22, 2009)

In focus groups, some audience members agreed. "In the Conservatorium space, the interval arrangements don't work well," said one. But all commented on the more "intimate experience" of the work in the smaller theatre, just as Mangin had intended: "I love it, and you can see well no matter where you are". Another participant agreed: "It was a more intimate experience [than the Lyric Theatre], and it didn't matter how far to the back I was, I still felt right in the action, and could see the orchestra members in the pit and the conductor. It created a lasting impression on me" (Focus Group B.4).

Criticism of the Conservatorium Theatre's front of house facilities and staff has not escaped the attention of Conservatorium management. Determined to make this a viable place for performance for all stakeholders, the Conservatorium is currently investing in improvement of both foyer facilities and staffing arrangements, in order to have "a positive impact on current and potential clients" (Conway, 2010, p.2).

Whilst Opera Queensland uses a range of stages, there is no doubt that the company sees its principal mainstage 'home' as the Lyric Theatre in QPAC. This is the venue which, despite its "more brutal" acoustic, has the production facilities and physical dimensions which make feasible the performance of larger operatic works. This element of possibility is also aligned with the audience expectations to which Mangin refers — staging, lighting, and flying facilities suited to traditional opera performance. Although available in the Conservatorium Theatre, they are relatively limited in comparison with those of the Lyric Theatre. Not only does the Lyric fulfil audience expectation, but it also has greater capacity on the stage and in the stalls. For the 2009 production of La Traviata, the Lyric Theatre was an economic decision, as well as a practical one (Mangin, personal communication January 22, 2009).

La Traviata, Lyric Theatre QPAC. Photo by Rob Maccoll, courtesy of Opera Queensland.

Queensland Ballet

While dance as an artform is both traditional and contemporary in its style and choice of works, this company's attitude is especially traditional in preferring that the audience focus entirely on the dancers on stage. This affects its choice of performance space, as management tends to discount those places (particularly outside) that do not allow the audience to give complete concentration to the performance. "As theatre," says Artistic Director Francois Klaus, "dance is a very practical form." General Manager Judith Anderson explained:

> Dance is an artform that is quite site-specific in terms of its requirements. Ballet is not constructed to be seen any way other than from the front, and so even playing it on a thrust stage or in the round is out of the question because of the aesthetics of the artform. Dance is a very space-hungry medium, it requires a large space. For health and safety reasons it requires a flat, wooden floor. (personal communication, April 15, 2009)

Although the company develops and presents new work constantly, it is usually performed in what might be seen as a 'traditional' setting which conforms to these practical needs: line of sight and freedom of movement. Anderson insists that "we're not a traditional ballet company at all" because the company is limited by its size, and does not have a repertoire that includes ballets requiring many dancers, although occasionally it draws upon its partnership with the Queensland Dance School of Excellence to augment the number of dancers. The relationship with place is therefore coloured by physical constraints such as size of stage and permutation of space, allowing safe movement and lifting for dancers, and good sight lines for the choreography. In most traditional ballet, distance between audience and dancers is preferred so that choreography patterns and lighting effects can work their magic. Choice of place for performance is more likely to be constrained by these issues.

Queensland Ballet The Nutcracker at the Lyric Theatre. Photo by Ken Sparrow, courtesy of Queensland Ballet.

Among dancers and company decision-makers, there is a a compelling mind-set that the total attention of the audience is required, which strongly influences issues relating to the choice of place. If there are distractions (e.g. in outside venues), the audience will not be able to concentrate on the dance, and the magic will be lost. Anderson provides an example:

> Here in Brisbane we have the River Stage which is a lovely setting but not the sort of performance space that allows the audience to become involved. It's a very remote experience for you as a member of the audience in that particular setting because you've got burger and popcorn stands at the back, you've got families with kids and eskies, and there's this wonderful festival atmosphere, but on the stage quite separate from you is a performance going on, and there is not even the connect that you might get with a rock concert. That sort of performance doesn't get through the fourth wall. We never do anything there. (personal communication April 15, 2009)

This attitude is different from that of The Australian Ballet, which has performed on Brisbane's River Stage as well as in a rainforest on Hamilton Island. Queensland's regional company Dancenorth has recently developed two works Night Café and Remember Me (the latter called a "standout" performance by arts journalist Suzanna Clarke) specifically for performance in non-conventional sites related to the repertoire, not all of them conducive to the audience being able to see every element of the dancers' performance. By contrast, the Queensland Ballet has focused on its home base, the Thomas Dixon Centre, as its alternative venue. This is a non-conventional venue but, in Anderson's words, "with the feel of the traditional." The audience is very close, and the format intends to break down any barriers between audience and dancers.

The choice of Thomas Dixon Centre as a venue affects the work likely to be performed. Judith Anderson insisted that "we would never present a complete work in that setting!" In lieu of major works, the company presents tasters of new works about to be performed at QPAC, and gives non-principal dancers the opportunity to increase their confidence in front of an audience. The concept is very successful, as Anderson explains:

> It sells out. We don't have to advertise it. That's because we've tried to keep it affordable, accessible. We keep it informal. We invite you into our home. If you don't know anything about ballet, this is the place to come. Girls can bring their boyfriends, you can have a yarn to the dancers afterwards, have a cup of coffee, glass of wine. We have deliberately taken an informal approach. (personal communication, April 15, 2009)

François Klaus explains Vis-a-Vis at the Thomas Dixon Centre in artistic terms:

> We can't use any sets at all, so it's purely dance. It's good for us [here] in the sense that we have a very good floor which is elastic — but we can only enter from the back, not the side. We don't pretend to be a theatre here. Instead, we are in an in-between situation, which is great for what we choose to do here. (personal communication, May 5, 2009)

Although the company has not analysed any transfer between audience at alternative venues and those at QPAC, Anderson is confident there are some audience members who attend only the Thomas Dixon Centre. Nonetheless, she is aware there are people who go to the company's performances no matter where they are located. She believes this is related to the extent to which the audience might feel emotionally involved. "Those [alternative venue] works create an emotional connection with people," she explains. "It's where it's set, how it's set, how it's lit, that can make a connection with people, and that seems most powerful." Explaining that emotional connection is difficult:

> I think there are things that perhaps [the audience] don't realize. You go into a space, and if the person beside you has a mobile phone, or the one beside you has a cold, someone is talking, all of that can impinge on the extent to which you will be involved. ... This goes back to the comments I was making before about performing in the gardens. The scope for engagement is really limited. (personal communication April 15, 2009)

Back to Bach. Queensland Ballet at Thomas Dixon Centre. Photo by Ken Sparrow, courtesy of Queensland Ballet.

The Queensland Ballet has performed in other venues, including St John's Cathedral in Brisbane City, but the concerns regarding practicalities remain:

> We did a work called The Passion in St John's Cathedral, but we recreated a stage within the cathedral, and you wouldn't call it non-traditional. We did two different works (The Passion, and St Francis). For The Passion the audience was in the pews, but for St Francis, a raked seating bank replaced the pews, and that improved the sight line. (personal communication April 15, 2009)

As Anderson explained, if the Ballet is to perform in a non-conventional venue that lacks the capacity to take sets, "the venue itself has to provide the set, and that's what the cathedral did. … What made the cathedral stronger in a way is that you are going into a real place which has an atmosphere". The audiences agreed, although one noted that "being in the cathedral was like being in purgatory" because of the pew seating (Focus Group B.4).

As predicted by both Judith Anderson and François Klaus, the audience loyal to Queensland Ballet seems to enjoy the company's performances only when the sight line is good. From the focus groups, it is evident that audience members on the whole do not have a preference for venue, only for a good sight line, which — according to the discussion participants — is not always achieved, even in the Lyric Theatre.

However, there was strong support for the Vis-a-vis Series at the Thomas Dixon Centre. "I love that small space," exclaimed one. "The new seats are nicely raked, and it's a very casual atmosphere. You walk in and there they are — doing their warm-ups right in front of you!" (Focus Group B.4)

One patron, a Russian immigrant, rued the lack of theatre binoculars at any of the spaces available in Brisbane. In Russia it is normal to receive them free of charge in any of the large venues, but not so in Brisbane. Confirming the concerns about sight lines expressed by Anderson and Klaus, she thought it would improve the sight line for ballet in the Lyric Theatre (Focus Group B.4).

Queensland Symphony Orchestra

As was confirmed by the account of the demise of the San Jose Symphony Orchestra which played in multipurpose halls, "every orchestra is at the mercy of the hall it plays in" (Wolf & Glaze, 2005, p.53). For the San Jose Symphony Orchestra, lack of access to first-rate acoustic and physical facilities made it difficult to attract philanthropic support, creating a direct link between place and survival (pp.54-55). This example underlines the importance of acoustics to an orchestra:

> acoustics are key to a great hall, and the best halls are purpose-built and designed exclusively for the orchestras that use them, as opposed to those halls that must accommodate other types of performing arts organizations as well. Even inexperienced concertgoers tend to react enthusiastically to the sound of a great hall, even when they may not be aware of what makes them feel the way they do. (p.54)

With the QPAC Concert Hall as its principal stage, Queensland Symphony Orchestra (QSO) has a distinctively traditional approach to programming, albeit with some contemporary 'adventure' confined to their home series at Ferry Rd. Artistic Director Richard Wenn explains:

> We're [compelled] to look at traditional music because of the audience expectations, but we also have to look at the future because the artform's continuing, and for the long-term future of the orchestra — you can't keep playing the same old music. So we're looking for a percentage of new music that doesn't alienate our audiences with the traditional forms, so there's a box office level that we hit at some points. (personal communication May 13, 2009)

Wenn considers the QSO to have "two special homes": QPAC as the main concert hall, and the Conservatorium Theatre, which he considers a special place acoustically. For him, "the room is part of the performance" because "there's a sense of occasion that's sometimes heightened in the right venue because of the venue itself" (personal communication May 13, 2009). It is Wenn's opinion that there is "more [acoustic] response from the Conservatorium. It's designed as a Concert Hall acoustically first and foremost, so it gives us that special edge." He chooses the Conservatorium Theatre particularly for "baroque music, early classical and small scale romantic music." Admitting that larger works had been tried at the Conservatorium, he notes that "you do have an overload" in the acoustics with some orchestral works (personal communication, May 13, 2009).

Like the opera company, Queensland Symphony Orchestra understands that there is "an intimacy" available at the Conservatorium Theatre. "The closer the audience, the more intimacy we get," said Richard Wenn (personal communication May 13, 2009). But they also express concern regarding facilities available at the Conservatorium.

> I think the facilities make a difference for the audience. We are going into an institution for learning, so when you enter the venue and step into the foyer it's relaxed and informal, but it doesn't have bars and cloak rooms — all of those trimmings. ... I think you'll find that there are audience members [who think] that it's a night out. ... it's a social norm. You can do that at the Conservatorium. But it's not a comfortable place [for it]. You're wandering around or in a big queue, and it's not the same. (personal communication May 13, 2009)

Conservatorium Theatre, Queensland Conservatorium of Music, Griffith University. Photo courtesy of Queensland Conservatorium of Music, Griffith University.

The orchestra's choice of repertoire therefore seems to have a relationship to its place for performance (although it less the venue, and more the specific audience, that features in these choices). Although in their QPAC 'home' (their reference), there is little move from traditional programming, their series at City Hall uses more popular repertoire which attracts an older audience for morning tea concerts. Contemporary work is usually performed at their own Ferry Road studio because fewer are likely to attend, and there is therefore less financial risk with the choice of venue.

As this indicates, there is an element of economy in these choices. As Wenn explains,

> One of the issues we haven't yet mentioned is the capacity — so if we're putting on a really popular program, we'll exceed the box office and we might as well put it on at QPAC, and that's an issue that goes beyond [the] artistic. It's common sense box office. … [At] QPAC we can get greater capacity and client comfort, and our costs are pretty spread across the board in a certain area. But to go to the Conservatorium we lose some of that and the costs overall per head are higher. We look at it from a financial perspective too. (personal communication, May 13, 2009)

The orchestra's own Ferry Road Studio is the cheapest of the options available to them.

> If we're premiering works by a local composer or international composer or contemporary composer, we're not likely to get the audience. It might be the conservatorium that's ideal for the work, but the overheads are more than QPAC in that respect [capacity]. Looking at things from [the perspective of] Ferry Road: costs are low, the staff can have everything set up and just leave it, there's no other owner of the building to worry about. People can come in and sit on chairs that are comfortable enough. (personal communication, May 13, 2009).

It would seem that the audience for Ferry Road is loyal but "less discerning" than the audience that prefers City Hall or the one which attends the Concert Hall. As Wenn explains,

> We don't have people saying 'I love coming to Ferry Road', but there's a feeling of it at the rock-face, coming to where the orchestra does all of its work, where all the rehearsals are done and you're seeing behind the scenes a little bit. Because it's not articulated, I think it's in the back of their minds.. (personal communication, May 13, 2009)

According to Wenn, the audiences are considered in the programming and the venue is chosen because of audience preferences. For example, older patrons like City Hall, traditional patrons like QPAC and the new music lovers will go wherever the new music is, and currently that is Ferry Road. However, Ferry Road days are numbered. The Orchestra is scheduled to move to the new ABC building on the South Bank, due for completion in 2012, and the Ferry Road building will be sold. Wenn explains that "we won't have a similar space [to Ferry Road] in the new building, but we ... would like to have a rehearsal room that could be used for performances too. That is all part of ongoing discussions with builders and the owners of the building" (personal communication, June 11, 2010). The plans, announced in 2009, include "a 600sqm Media Production Studio which will primarily be used for rehearsal by the Queensland Symphony Orchestra (QSO), as well as ABC radio and TV production" (ABC Brisbane, 2009).

The Orchestra's move to South Bank may make a difference to the Ferry Road audience. Adjacent to both QPAC and the Queensland Conservatorium, the new home will be in a location which is more accessible by public transport, and better known to audiences of many kinds.

Focus group response indicated that audience members would go wherever the preferred repertoire was being played: "I wouldn't care where it was, I go just for the performance," said one, with agreement from most in one focus group. Nonetheless, there were more comments regarding the lack of efficient bar services at the Conservatorium and Ferry Road, and negative remarks about the distance of Ferry Road from public transport, and the price of events at QPAC (Focus Group B.1). With access to Ferry Road only of concern for a limited time until the QSO moves to South Bank, and the Conservatorium's revision of its foyer facilities, it would seem that the only one of these issues which is unlikely to change is the price of tickets.

There were very positive comments about specific events at City Hall before its closure. For example, one thought the Last Night at the Proms was very suited to the City Hall venue. "It was a fantastic atmosphere! It was what QSO did which made it special — streamers on each seat and the audience was encouraged to dress up, and it was fun" (Focus Group B.1). Still, the non-raked seating drew complaint. The audience can't always see, and that is still important, even for orchestral music.

Despite its lack of raked seating, St John's Cathedral received good audience feedback for performances during the period when QPAC was unavailable due to restoration work. Although the sacred repertoire suggested a cathedral performance, management was less interested in the venue because of that relationship, and more concerned with replacing QPAC. Yet the audience was delighted. "It's a fantastic venue for the experience of just being in the cathedral to hear the music which was all sacred music," said one, and another agreed: "St John's is very grand, like wow!, with a massive acoustic" (Focus Group A.1).

Camerata of St John's, in St John's Cathedral. Photo courtesy of Camerata of St John's.

Queensland Theatre Company

The Queensland Theatre Company (QTC) is quite versatile in its annual programming of nine mainstage performances in various venues, and many other programs in schools and communities, as well as one-off events. As General Manager Libby Anstis puts it, the company's audience is not just at QPAC on Saturday night, but also "Indigenous kids in Weipa" and other places.

According to Anstis, the company knows and has categorised its audience in ways that relate also to their choice of space:

> We've been doing the same market research on our mainstage audiences regularly; ... so we have [a] longitudinal response. We broke our audiences up into four different lifestyle choices. There's the Blockbuster audience, and they're the type that will go to the six dance shows a week that have someone like Todd McKenny and Nancy Hayes in it; they'll only come every few years; they'll be buying tickets to The Paris Opera Ballet [this month]. Then there's The Traditionals; they'll subscribe to seven or nine plays and trust us with that. There's The Sporadics — often they're the ones that don't choose what they go to; they'll tag along with a couple of girlfriends who usually come to a few things throughout the year. And then there's The Innovators — and they're about 25% of our total audience: they want to see new stuff, new material, new plays — lots of our Season Ticket audiences really embrace that. They're sophisticated theatre goers who love the traditional works but are also hungry for new experiences and materials that they haven't seen before. (personal communication June 1, 2009)

Within those choices are implications for the type of place which the company might choose for its productions. Although most of their programming is at QPAC venues, the company has been using their home venue, the Billie Brown Studio for some productions. In this setting, the company is able to create a deliberate "home" feel to the way in which the repertoire is placed on stage, and also in the way that staff engage with audience in the foyer, by talking to them, and encouraging interaction with actors after the show. Choice of work in the home studio relies on "inexact science", but tends to use newer personnel in order to attract a wider (maybe younger) audience.

> We've been challenging some of the assumptions about our audiences; it's been less about the venue that they go to, but the type of experience they have when they're there. This is the second year in a row that we've chosen to hold shows in our own studio. It's a bit of a funkier atmosphere, it's old, purpose-built for us, it's got a very different vibe to QPAC. And we'll choose one show and have an Under 30s night. They'll get a couple of free drinks during the performance, we'll organize a DJ to come out post-show and have the actors come out and have a bit of a party. We're gradually building a new database of audience based on that experience; and I'm not sure if it's necessarily the venue or the total experience. (personal communication, June 1, 2009).

As noted, with most larger work, QPAC is the preferred 'home' venue because of its facilities both on and around the performance house, for example, parking and restaurants. But, as Anstis explained, the company does use a range of venues, depending on artistic and economic need:

> From our point of view, and again we're back in mainstage world for a second: there's QPAC, the Playhouse and the Cremorne Theatre and The Lyric I suppose, but normally drama looks pretty average in The Lyric Theatre. There's our own theatre, the Bill [sic] Brown Studio, there's The Powerhouse, and then we're starting to get a bit short on options. ... Of course there are regional venues too. So, we tend to make the choice of venue based on artistically what's going to work well there, but there are quite a lot of pragmatic decisions that are made too. If we're planning a big event, for example we're presenting a guest company, we'll generally choose The Playhouse as it means a shorter season — less accommodation and travel etc. A lot of the decisions are based on venue capacity. We'll tend to do a lot of our riskier shows in our own venue because it's a 220 seat venue. If we think we've got a show with ... commercial success, we're not going to do that in a 220 seat venue. It's a combination of artistic [consideration] and pragmatism. (personal communication June 1, 2009)

Queensland Theatre Company production of The Little Dog Laughed (2010) in the Billie Brown Studio. Left to right: Nick Cook and Tom O'Sullivan. Photo: Rob Maccoll, courtesy of QTC.

It would seem that QTC enjoys loyalty no matter the venue — the home venue has traffic problems, parking problems, and nowhere to eat/drink except at the venue in informal context. Whilst it can't control those issues, the company does acknowledge that front of house facilities are important:

> It's one of the things we struggle with at our own facility. We have a bar and you can buy your snacks there, but there's nowhere you can walk to for a cup of coffee afterwards or have a meal beforehand. Parking's been an issue here, so for some of our audiences that is definitely part of the level of enjoyment you have. Going to the theatre is a shared social occasion, so you want to have all that stuff, make it as easy as possible, be able to get into the car park without anxiety that you're not going to get to the show on time. You want to be able to have a meal before hand and a coffee after if you're up for it. (personal communication June 1, 2009)

Still, the audiences will go to QTC's Billie Brown Theatre because of loyalty to the company. In an effort to reward that loyalty, the company compensates by shaping the foyer services to their advantage:

> When we're in the Bill Brown studios, all the front of house staff and bar staff are Queensland Theatre Company employees, so we have the opportunity to make it much more integrated. All the front of house staff come to dress rehearsals and have a drink afterward with the actors, so everyone knows each other. At QPAC, the staff are very professional, but if you ask them something about the show, they won't have a clue. And that's because of the volume of churn rate going through there. We work very hard to create that overall experience but you can't control that at a venue somewhere else, e.g. if someone comes in late in our venue, we give them a piece of paper that tells them the plot they've missed so far. But the usher can tell them what they've missed so far, and background information that makes it a slightly better experience. (personal communication June 1, 2009)

The QTC have made a determined effort to understand the needs of the audience which attends the Billie Brown Studio.

> We've documented what it is to come into the Bill Brown studio and [by] shaping the behaviour of the front of house [staff] … we can create an experience [of] 'relaxed urban confidence'. You don't need to wear your 15 year old dinner suit — people will be respectful toward you but it's a much more relaxed tone of language that they use. We've really thought about that in a considered way — that it's the whole experience we're trying to create. (personal communication June 1, 2009)

In focus groups, the audience members responded positively to these efforts, calling the Billie Brown Studio "interesting, with a very different ambience," although the bar is "most basic" and the whole experience is "more like a plywood box compared to a living room" (Focus Group B.4). Still, despite complaints about lack of public transport, parking difficulties, and reduced facilities, the audience members who participated in the focus groups insisted that they choose the work rather than the venue.

Tapping into a wealth of approaches, practices and perceptions, this cluster provides a number of important insights illustrating the range of variants which are part of a company's decision to perform in a particular place, and the audience response to those places. Most flagship companies feel a strong responsibility to present mainstream, canonical repertoire. They prefer to do so in places that provide production value and the audience comfort conducive to the art experience patrons are seeking. In addition, all of them create more niche experiences for particular repertoire or audiences, often working deliberately with the interplay between place and performance: a strategy that audiences recognise and appreciate.

Cluster 3: Mainstream festivals

> Australia loves its arts festivals. They attract hundreds of thousands of patrons; … their profile and popularity ensures they bring a concentrated and varied cultural menu to a wide mainstream audience. The big-city arts festivals are invitations for local patrons to try new and different tastes, and audiences take up the offer with enthusiasm. People attend shows they might never otherwise think of seeing, and strike up lively debates with strangers afterwards. (Croggan, 2010, p.1)

In recent years, festivals have proliferated across Australia, particularly in non-metropolitan areas. They are variously linked through different artforms and demographics to tourism, regional development, and opportunities for performance artists to build audience and income. The strength of multi-staged festivals is that the audience decides on how to create its own experience of art and of place. As Chris Gibson explains, music festivals in particular "both reflect and contribute to social and cultural changes, such as the diffusion of musical genres with specialist audiences, inward migration of particular demographic groups and shifting place identities" (2007, p.65).

Given its attractive climate for outside events, Queensland abounds in festivals. In addition to creating the 'special' atmosphere that attracts broad audiences, festivals have the potential to push boundaries: artistic, notional, physical and emotive. They are "the magnetic events where we gauge how healthy our culture is" (Croggan, 2010, p.4). The best of them challenge our sense of what is, daring to suggest, even demonstrate, what might be. Former director of the Adelaide Festival, Robyn Archer suggests that "Festivals … can offer the opportunity for catharsis and transformation — if it's a festival of music we can overburden the ears and the brain to the point of change. In the best post-festival experience we find that ever-after we hear things differently" (2009, p.2). Just occasionally, such a suggestion takes root and influences ongoing work among artforms or organisations that take up the challenge and move forward. Finally, festivals by their very nature need to explore new places for presenting artforms. It is therefore not surprising that the seed which gave life to Redefining Places for Art was sown in a festival: the 2003 Queensland Music Festival under the artistic direction of Lyndon Terracini, who is at his best working outside conventional spaces.

By pushing boundaries, festivals also blur boundaries: artistic, intellectual, and social. Gibson's words about music are true for all performing arts: that diffusion of the genres among audiences that are otherwise 'specialist' in their thinking may result in 'inward migration' among participants. From his research on music festivals, Gibson established that festivals not only contribute to audience development but also to the development of artforms, and the social and economic life of the places in which they are held.

> Festivals have emerged as a reflection of the transformation of places, their populations and economic bases, while contributing to such demographic changes, building reputations for certain 'festival towns' …, and attracting out-of-town audiences. … In the case of rural areas, music festivals have opened up markets of a particular type, have been imagined as 'bringing culture to the provinces', or have been embraced as a means of promoting local musical performance and industries that otherwise struggle to find audiences. (2007, p.66)

Croggan makes clear that in a country like Australia, where the population is spread across wide geographical distances "and where cultural like can sometimes seem suffocatingly restricted," festivals can have "a vast cultural impact." One of this country's biggest states, Queensland hosts a number of major festivals, many of them specific to particular genres of music, some of them celebrating more than one artform. This study encountered a number of them, but chose to focus on the Queensland Music Festival, specifically for its determined relationship with place, particularly during the festivals curated by Lyndon Terracini (2001, 2003, 2005).

Queensland Music Festival & Brisbane Festival

The Queensland Biennial Festival of Music (QBMF) was first held in 1999 as a re-imaging of what had originally been the Brisbane Biennial Festival of Music in 1991. Announcing the festival in 1998, Arts Minister Matt Foley insisted it was not a Brisbane festival that would tour, but would occur across the State, and be different in each of the presenting centres. Foley was determined "to recognise those professional artists who choose to live and work in regional Queensland" (Lancaster,1999). Challenged to create a festival across three cities with less funding than was available to the Brisbane version (Brisbane Biennial Music Festival) of 1991, Artistic Director Simone de Haan did not have much room to move. There were some non-conventional spaces employed for special effect: in Mackay, the Central Queensland Conservatorium of Music contributed a series of restaurant concerts, the restaurants chosen to match the music; and an Indigenous event took place around the Lagoons on the outskirts of the city.

In 2001 Terracini joined the QBMF, changing the focus, the coverage, and eventually, the name (to Queensland Music Festival). According to Keith Gallasch (2009), Terracini "quickly realised the demanding vision for a statewide, participatory event", including many smaller towns and regional centres which would rarely have otherwise been considered, as well as the larger metropolitan areas along the coast. He brought together local government and private enterprise with sponsorship from international sources to double the budget and the impact of the festival within two years. Gallasch writes of him "enthusing and cajoling mayors and communities and introducing them to leading artists from across Australia as their collaborators" (2009, p.18). As a result, "the legacy lives on in many of those towns" (op.cit.p.18).

Terracini volunteers that it was his experience of creating an adaptation of Peter Weir's film The Cars that Ate Paris for the Northern Rivers Performing Arts (NORPA) organisation in Lismore that influenced his thinking about connecting with community. "It was a combination of making art, and at the same time social work," he explains. When the opportunity to direct the Queensland Biennial Festival of Music came along, "what I'd learned from NORPA ... helped me enormously." The Queensland Music Festival (QMF), in turn, has "informed a hell of a lot of what I've done [since] with the Brisbane Festival" (personal communication, August 13, 2009). He mentions in particular the Brisbane Backyards, which arranges shows for people's backyards, and the Across Brisbane program, which does at suburban level what the Queensland Music Festival did in regional centres — reflects the culture of the place. For Terracini, place is more complex than just another venue. "You know, plenty of people do shows in different venues," he acknowledges, "but it's not really about the culture of that place. It's just doing another gig, touring in yet another meaningless show" (personal communication August 13, 2009).

His view is shared by some of the audience members consulted in this study, who noted how performance spaces develop their own style, and the same event in two different places can be quite dissimilar. One participant in particular drew attention to the lack of audience experience in such variance. Her words are very like those of Terracini:

> Perhaps audiences haven't a sufficiently developed sense of the possibilities that exist in seeing shows in different venues, and they worry that it was different. They use the same words, or the same music, or the same gestures, or the same costumes, but it was different, and they didn't like it as much. To my mind every venue develops their own style and they do shows, or individual artists get presented, in their own particular style. (Focus Group B.4)

It would be reassuring for Terracini to hear the agreement among participants in this study. For example, "I know many people who won't go anywhere other than QPAC … because they know they will get a show that won't surprise them too much," said one. And another elaborated "at QPAC, you're one of the masses. …I'll go there for an experience, but you are much more involved here [at Judith Wright Centre of Contemporary Arts], much more emotionally connected." The experience of bigger theatres such as are available at QPAC were likened to getting "the same experience as going to the movies, except you've got more of a surround sound experience." On the other hand, at "one of these [smaller] places it is much more intimate because ….you can see it and breathe it and that brings you right into it" (Focus Group B.2). The character of the space has the capacity to attract audience, just as much as any event might.

Aligning artistic decision-making with the culture of a place is, for Terracini, in keeping with the way Indigenous people have always made their art. "Performance and life have been connected to Aboriginal culture for eons," he explains. "If you go into an Indigenous community with a western attitude of divorcing [the show from social work], then (a) it never works and (b) it's an imposition and an exploitation of the community" (personal communication August 13, 2009).

Expounding his theory of festivals being great trees with the capacity to nourish the plants growing underneath their canopies, Terracini says that "if you're clear about connecting to as many people as possible at a grass roots level, and you're clear why you're doing that and why you want to do that, then I think everyone understands."

He thinks in terms of a cultural pyramid, with the greater spread at the base (under the canopy), and "at the top you have some of that pointy stuff", he says, referring to work of high quality. He applies this philosophy to a community of any size, believing that "the cultural life of our nation begins in its individual communities" (personal communication August 13, 2009).

In a speech given for the Australian Business Arts Foundation in Melbourne and Sydney in 2009, Terracini conceded that his ideas are not new. He quoted J.F. Archibald, the first editor of The Bulletin who, having selected A.B. Patterson from thousands of budding poets who submitted their work to him in the 1880s, wrote to Patterson offering him work:

> Mr Patterson,
> I want you to remember that Australia is a big place and I want you to write the stuff that will appeal not only to Sydney people but that will be of interest to the pearler up on Thursday Island and the farmer down in Victoria. In all public issues the press are apt to sing in chorus. But if you go to a concert you may hear a man sing in discord which is put there deliberately by a composer and that discord catches the ear over the voices of the chorus. Well Mr Patterson, don't be afraid to sing the discord … for the same reason do not be afraid to cheer for the underdog… (in Terracini, 2009, p.2)

Employing this theory across a state as vast as Queensland is not simple because the cultures of places change as people move in and out. Many of the QMF events are such that the entire town or community may be the site for the festival. Terracini admits to initial surprise at the difference between cultures in various towns.

> Maybe it seems obvious to everyone, but it wasn't obvious to me, that the culture of Mt Isa is so different to the culture of Noosa, for example. Suddenly I'd think 'well hang on, these two places are in the same State. They should not only be in different countries, but different hemispheres! Different universes! (personal communication August 13, 2009)

That same principle applied to Brisbane when he was creating the Brisbane Festival, visiting different suburbs to explore their characters.

> The suburb of West End .. is really different to Hamilton. And Hamilton's very different to Inala, for example. So all of those different cultures within a city make up this sort of patchwork quilt, if you like. The difficulty in a large city is identifying all those cultures, and finding a way that you can connect them, and [ensuring] that you can connect to all of them. (personal communication August 13, 2009)

In trying to discover the particular culture in each town of Queensland, Terracini talked to people — "in the pub, the hotel, on the street, in a restaurant, anywhere." He did this in Charters Towers, a town with a strong connection with its past. "Its great glory days were 150 years ago," he says. "They had the first stock exchange [in Queensland], and all the buildings are lovely old buildings. You don't have a conversation about the future in Charters Towers!" Terracini explains that while most adults in Charters Towers are very proud of the history of the place, young people prefer to think about the future. His solution was Charters Towers: The Musical, a show which included a lot of local stories mixed in with "thinking about its future and what that could mean" (personal communication, August 13, 2009).

Mt Isa, on the other hand, is a heavy machinery town, "so it seemed obvious to me that you'd do a show about heavy machinery," and thus the idea of bobcats and excavators dancing love duets in Bobcats Dancing was born for the QMF in 2003, followed (by popular demand) in 2005 by Bobcat Magic. The story behind the second bobcat ballet was based on a person who had magical powers with heavy machinery, and as Terracini puts it, "if someone comes to town in Mt Isa, and they can fix heavy machinery like that, then it's as though Jesus Christ has arrived on a bobcat!" He finds it interesting that in different places, different values apply, different skills are revered. "If someone could fix a bobcat in a minute in Noosa, no one would hear about it" (personal communication August 13, 2009).

Bobcats Dancing, Mt Isa, Queensland Festival 2003. Photo by Marc Grimwade Photography, courtesy of Queensland Music Festival.

In Winton, Terracini commissioned percussionist Graeme Leak to design and build a musical fence on the site of the Qantas museum to give children (and visitors) something to play. Made from fencing wire which can be adjusted to change the pitch, the fence can be played in any number of ways without any special skill. Leak's design also creates its own music when activated by the wind, a "wonderfully eerie experience" says Terracini (2007, p.8). The idea emanated from Terracini's realisation that "in big-sky country … people are connected not by the roads that bisect the land, but by the fences that delineate the massive properties they inhabit. People meet at the common boundary, the fence" (9).

Terracini tells the story of a local man who thought it was "a **** stupid idea" until he was dragged along to the opening performance and his grandkids were playing (and loving) the fence. By the time Terracini returned to Winton months later, that same man was taking his grandchildren out to play the fence regularly (personal communication, March 12, 2005).

For Terracini, there is fascination in what he learns from each place, just as the locals learn from the experience he brings to town. Further, whilst he is committed to identifying and building on local culture, Terracini doesn't necessarily think that a locally-created production can't travel. When asked how he marries his sense of local place being unique with his motto of "connect locally and resonate globally" (2007, p.13), he offers as an example his touring of the original NORPA production. Refusing to recast with professional actors, he took the Lismore production of The Cars That Ate Paris, complete with "feral players", on a tour including Perth and Adelaide, sharing what was essentially 'Lismore' with other regional cities.

Terracini's belief that one place can be transported to other places is validated by the BBC World Service interest in A Miracle in Brisbane, a work that was central to the 2009 Brisbane Festival. The work is an adaptation of a Vittorio de Sica film, Miracolo a Milano (The Miracle in Milan), a largely voiceless opera that has been touring the world for 25 years. It is described by its composer Giorgo Battistelli as a "voiceless protest against humanity [that] highlights the incontrovertible rights of marginalised people to stake a claim in a world that ignores them" (quoted in Gallasch,2009b, p.18).

With Rhoda Roberts as Director and featuring 25 Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and other artists, Terracini adjusted the film about Italian villagers from just outside Milan to tell the story of Indigenous people living on the outskirts of Brisbane. The discovery of oil on their land creates the tension, as government and private enterprise seek to take over the oil-soaked land. As Rhoda Roberts explained, Aboriginal people have long had a connection to the land on which Brisbane is built, but when they visit or live on it they are seen as fringe dwellers (in Gallasch, op.cit., p.18). While the 'miracle' of the film is that the villagers go to paradise, the miracle in Terracini's version is that the Indigenous people are not moved from their 'country'. As Terracini explains it,

> while it's specifically about aboriginal people in Brisbane, it does obviously have resonances in a lot of different places. … you could relate it to North American Indians, you could relate it to all sorts of things that are happening in Africa, China, anywhere. They may be different people, but the story really connects. (personal communication August 13, 2009)

In this example, Terracini demonstrates that place is transportable because in some cases it may be aligned with more than just geographic location. Place is defined by elements which are simultaneously geographic, historical, social, cultural, and emotional.

Despite producing a work which has Indigenous people beamed around the globe via the BBC network, Terracini expresses concern that one is less likely to find Indigenous people in places of traditional Western infrastructure. "Unless it is something like Bangarra [Indigenous Dance Company], you never see Indigenous people at QPAC. … they don't feel comfortable [there], I think. They think it's a space that's not for them" (personal communication August 13, 2009).

It is due to this belief that has Terracini position much of his 'place' work outside, in closed streets or parks, which he believes are much more accessible to everyone. "One of the reasons we do all these Across Brisbane things outside … is so that everyone can come, and they can bring their kids. There are no barriers for them. Ideally everyone can feel they've been part of the festival, without spending a lot of money." Speaking of programming Into Africa for the African community in the suburb of Yeronga in Brisbane, he described approaching various African communities, each of which created a choir, rehearsed separately and then performed en masse for the event. As Terracini explains, it was about learning to work together:

> Sometimes they bring a huge amount of baggage from what's occurred where they've left [in Africa] … so marrying all that together, and trying to get people just to leave their baggage at the door was part of it. … all that stuff that may have existed, certainly on that day, they leave outside. And if it can happen for a day, then it can happen more often. (personal communication August 13, 2009)

Asked why a choral event needed to happen in their own suburb, Terracini replies that he believes those African communities would be more comfortable there "because there are a lot more black faces there." By underlining the identity of the place, he makes it possible for the people to feel at ease, coming together to enjoy a soccer match between African teams, an African choir, African bands and African food.

Into Africa 2009, Brisbane Festival 2009. Photo by Marc Grimwade Photography, courtesy of Brisbane Festival.

One gem in Terracini's programming is his ability to think outside the square in demonstrating the significance of place. His 2009 Brisbane Festival's Cherbourg Walk told the stories of local Indigenous communities in different ways. Until a curfew was declared in 1855, Indigenous people who lived on the south side of the Brisbane River were free to live as they wished. The curfew forced them to stay on one side of West End's 'Boundary Street' (still so named today) "after 4pm or on Sundays" (Boundary Street History, 2009), ensuring complete exclusion of Indigenous peoples from towns and cities. Subsequently in 1904 those living in and around West End were forcibly removed, some in cattle trucks, some on foot, to Baramba (now Cherbourg), an Indigenous community 275 kilometres north of Brisbane. For those forced to walk, the journey took ten days (Terracini, personal communication, May 20, 2010).

In acknowledgement of this dislocation, Terracini programmed the Cherbourg Walk to begin in Cherbourg on the first day of the 2009 festival, and finish on the last day of the festival in West End. Participants camped along the way, telling their stories at night.

> Most walked, with buses available for the elders who were too old to walk. Terracini wanted to remind everyone of this story of displacement, which has been largely forgotten:
> Most people that I've spoken to in Brisbane had no idea what Boundary Street meant. It was just the name of a street. And I think it's a shame if we forget that. It's certainly important for a lot of people to remember what the curfew was about, and what it was like [for the aboriginal people]. (personal communication August 13, 2009)

Using the walk, Terracini was able to highlight the significance of the place West End to the Indigenous people, and that of Boundary Street. The distance between Cherbourg and West End was magnified by inviting those Indigenous peoples over whose country the participants were walking to tell their stories. The notions of place and displacement from place were carefully interwoven into an event that allowed healing through the presence of counsellors who participated in the journey.

But is this art? Despite elsewhere confronting sentiments that it "may seem entertaining, … fashionable and gimmiky but is not art," Terracini firmly believes it is, certain that art should have "the capacity to see the world and ourselves very differently and ideally to change our lives." He reminds us of the way evolution has shaped what we consider to be art:

> I think we've divorced the making of art from everyday life far too much. … we've fostered the idea that [art is] only for a very small number of people. There's a confusion I think in the community, and also in government particularly, that making art is elitist. I think we have to take responsibility for that, because we've for many, many years fostered that elitism. (personal communication, August 13, 2009)

Seeking to "preserve the nobility of genuine creative inspiration," his solution is to get out of the large theatres and into the parks, and make art free "so people get a handle on it," trusting that they will eventually return, paying to see it. He offers an example from the time of the 2009 Brisbane Festival:

> With Brisbane Backyards last time we did it for nothing, this time we're charging, and we've sold 97% of the tickets. If we'd charged the first time around, it probably wouldn't have worked. It was a new concept. (personal communication August 13, 2009)

For Terracini, this concept presents a good example of making a connection between artist and audience: "It can't be any more accessible than in someone's back yard" said Deborah Conway, Artistic Director of the 2009 QMF (personal communication, November 11, 2009). The place makes the art accessible. The back yard is the most basic manifestation of his philosophy of going local. "It's all bound up with where you live, where you work, having that feeling of place, the culture of the village" (Terracini, personal communication August 13, 2009).

In a move which completes the full circle from salon concerts to concert hall and back again, the 'backyard' example is now being employed by Arts Queensland as they explore the prospects of house concerts — classical music concerts positioned in homes around the city, around the state.

Not one to shrink from the new, in his final Brisbane Festival (2009), Terracini curated a media art exhibition, Totally Nowhere Emotion Expansion, which had a clever spin on place. The 'totally nowhere' work was available to audiences either in a mobile media art gallery, which travelled to various locations in Brisbane and South East Queensland, or online via the festival website.

The Queensland Music Festival has been presented twice since Terracini moved on to the Brisbane Festival in 2005. Paul Grabowsky directed the 2007 festival, deliberately employing different strategies and thinking to what he called that "creature of Lyndon Terracini", the QMF. "What I did try to do was stamp it with my own personality," he explained, noting that it was not easy to ignore expectations. "There was this kind of terrible sense of being locked in — in a sense — to what my predecessor had been doing because it was considered so successful," he said, giving as an example the anticipated festival opening at Winton. Uninspired by the musical fence Terracini had commissioned from Leak, he found instead a National Park, with "huge alluvial plains and you couldn't have a more spectacular setting anywhere in Australia, it was just beautiful." Immediately Grabowsky announced that "if we are going to open in Winton, this is where we are going to do it!" (personal communication November 10, 2009)

Whether or not Grabowsky wanted to do things differently, place remained significant to the event. Having combined Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities with a visiting African children's choir and singer Kate Miller-Heidke, Grabowsky describes the result: "It was quite a show we put on, at the crack of dawn with the first ray of sun, and the dijeridu playing and almost as if on cue, a herd of kangaroos came bounding out" (personal communication, November 10, 2009).

Whilst not anticipating that change will result, Grabowsky does acknowledge the place of any event is crucial for making a connection with people:

> The idea of putting anything on at all which is original work in somewhere like Longreach is certainly different from what normally happens there, but at the same time it doesn't necessarily make people radically rethink their lives. I don't believe in being controversial just for the sake of it. It's hard enough to get people to go to a show in the first place. If you are going to make it even harder for them that is not immediately obvious, then you are certainly up against it. (personal communication, November 10, 2009)

Whatever Grabowsky's intention, the combined effect of place and community in this case realised change of the kind that Terracini proposes. Grabowsky was amazed that so many people gathered for the opening in this very remote location: "To see several hundred people traveling to get to Winton at dawn where it was about zero degrees on that morning, you gotta love that!" But more significantly, he hadn't anticipated that the combined effect of place and community in this case realised change of the kind that Terracini proposes. Grabowsky tells a story which describes the significance of the choices he made about place and combined communities:

> I heard that later that day a local farmer turned up at the home of an elder of the local Indigenous community. This guy was known as a bit of a redneck, and he handed her a box and they were artifacts that had been in his family since I don't know when, and as his own personal gesture of reconciliation, he gave them back to her. She was completely overcome. It was all because of the show that morning. The penny had dropped. There's something about the power of music and community to work together for change at a fundamental level, I believe in that. (personal communication, November 10, 2009)

Grabowsky strongly believes that place played a role in bringing about the return of the artifacts. For him, place is not only a geographical location, "it is a relationship that people have with a space." He thinks that those who were present "were able to experience their own place in a way they had never done before, and the music merely articulated that. That heightening of feeling that it is your place, I think is terribly significant" (personal communication, November 10, 2009). His words reiterate Terracini's philosophy of taking the event to the audience, to wherever is 'their place'.

In Cooktown in far north Queensland, where Captain Cook brought his ship for repairs after an altercation with the reef, Grabowsky built a musical ship on the foreshore of the harbour. Reminiscent in some ways of the musical fence, this ship has percussion instruments built into its structure, and it sits in parkland near the water. Although the park has often been used for events, the Musical Ship has become a focal point, even a stage in its own right. As one local said, "It is now a part of that landscape, simply because it is there, visually you can't miss it" (Focus Group E). Children play it during the regular Saturday morning markets which are held in the same park. On Friday mornings, the special education class comes down to 'play the ship', just as that man's grandchildren continue to 'play the fence' in Winton.

The Musical Ship on the foreshore at Cooktown. Photo by Helen Lancaster

Audiences experience such events with enthusiasm. Some speak of the difference of attending performances outside the conventional theatre setting, where they can relax, and as Terracini notes, "be comfortable" about the place they are in. Curiously, the fact that an event is part of a festival may be lost in the mix: "Sometimes you forget what's part of what festival — I remember more single performances, sometimes rather than [their] being a part of a festival" (Focus Group E).

Many spoke of the place as the primary attraction, as is the case with the Belgian Spiegeltent, one of the Queensland Music Festival traditions which has since also been part of the Brisbane Festival. As one focus group participant said, by its very construction, the Spiegeltent implies "something spontaneous, it's not concrete and steel. It's smaller and not so rigid in its setup, and it's round! There's something about the shape of it…". It is a place with which the audience associates performance, fantasy, spontaneity, and fun. As with audiences who trust their small local venues, like Empire Theatre or the Judith Wright Centre for Contemporary Art, the audience expects that whatever happens at the Spiegeltent is likely to move them. "If I feel like some music, I might have a look around and see what's on, and check it out" (Focus Group B.3). Patrons can take a chance on an artist they don't know, and try before they buy a ticket for the same event in a larger theatre.

The Spiegeltent, Brisbane Festival 2009. Photo by Marc Grimwade Photography, courtesy of Brisbane Festival.

Terracini reflects that when subscribers demonstrate trust by purchasing a season ticket even if they don't recognise works on a program, "they take the risk, and that's when really interesting things happen." He acknowledges, however, that "you have to have that connection first [in order] to build that trust" (personal communication August 13, 2009). The trust is sometimes manifested in the place, the venue or even the town, especially in cases where the entire town becomes the location for the work.

In the same way, festivals are intensive, degustation events, where participants are more likely to try many new things, and maybe come back for one or two special ticketed items. Large venues with high overheads are at the other end of the spectrum. By nature, they are not associated with spontaneity, but with forward planning "because you need to think about good seats and if you leave it too long, ... [you'll miss out]." (Focus Group B.2). Equally, there was a concern expressed about planning for high ticket costs. An event at one of the larger venues, for example QPAC is more likely to carry a higher ticket cost.

That does not mean that patrons don't enjoy the experience of a place like QPAC. Said one participant, "I remember when this was opened 25 years ago. I think it's a sense within the building that makes the performance." Another reflected on the sense of occasion associated with the place: "I don't know if it's [due] to the performance or to the experience of attending the performance: It's that excitement of the surroundings — it adds to that sense of the experience, and it's like an entrée to the main meal — it sets the scene in a different way" (Focus Group B.1).

Contemporary musician Deborah Conway curated the 2009 Queensland Music Festival with a strong sense of place being "an essential part of the manifesto" of the festival. "The Queensland Music Festival is absolutely about place," she explains. "It is about local stories being told by local people with the assistance of national and international professionals to achieve excellence" (personal communication, November 11, 2009). Rather than ignore work of the past, she built upon it. For example, where Grabowsky had built the Musical Ship in Cooktown (barely finished just before its one performance), Conway chose to create an event around the ship based on community development over a period of two months leading into the performance. "When I saw the [Musical] Ship, I thought we really needed to bring people together who could make this thing sing, to involve the community, but illustrate to the community that it is an incredible asset, and look what it can do" (personal communication, November 11, 2009).

The resulting commission by composer Damien Barbeler used the Ship to illustrate in a musical way the sense of first contact between white Europeans and Indigenous Australians, a story with which the local people strongly identify. Written for a singer and chamber music group accompanied by three local choirs, one of them Indigenous, each accompanying the songs in their own way, the work was more appealing to the local community than had been the 2007 event in which Grabowsky introduced the Ship. Their reaction was stronger to Conway's version because it offered more enduring outcomes, having engaged community choirs over a longer period of time (Focus Group E). It also included a piece for massed percussion, undertaken by the school community, to demonstrate the capacity of the Musical Ship.

As an example of how place dictates the event, Conway suggests the 2009 QMF event in Charleville. "The piece itself is absolutely rooted in the legendary stories of Charleville," she explains. "It told their past, their present and their future through [local] elements." Describing what she refers to as an "extraordinary event", Conway said the event "spoke volumes because it … brought them all together to create it and it involved so many people." Audience members were excited by the variety, commenting on the motocross riders who used jumps on either side of the levee banks. "It was all so embedded in the town — the story of the night sky, using the girl guides, the bikes, … they couldn't have done it anywhere else," said one, who had travelled to experience the performance (Focus Group A.1).

Although it didn't leave a fence or a musical ship, this was an event with an enduring social legacy. For the first time, one creative experience brought together diverse elements of the community, from young pony club riders to older women dancing, and motocross riders being valued for their skills rather than condemned for their noise. "The resonances are still being felt," said Conway, describing the fact that the experience has catapulted a young member of the community into a drama school in Brisbane (personal communication, November 11, 2009).

In another of the previously successful Terracini-inspired events, Opera at Jimbour, Conway kept the name, the location and the concept, but introduced artists and programming that did not conform to the audience expectation of 'opera'. Intriguingly, although the artists (the Noonan family) are highly successful from a classical background, many audience members who had anticipated an evening of arias with their Jimbour wine were disappointed. Conway called it "framing opera in a different way', not only related to a different space, but also to difference in the mix of work performed, both popular and light classical. Acknowledging that the new look was not universally popular, Conway admits that "people were upset that they weren't getting opera." She attributes this to the expectations that had been built over time, whilst realising that keeping the original title Opera at Jimbour was not helpful. "Our marketing was very clear, but [those who complained] weren't thinking it might be different [from previous incarnations]" (personal communication, November 11, 2009).

Comments from the focus groups were mixed. Whilst one patron commented that "It's a journey — you go for the place, and not for the opera", some of the audience were scathing in their responses: "I thought it was rubbish!" said one who clearly did not know of Katie Noonan's success as a popular singer. "I was really disappointed," added another, "because I'd been before I thought I knew what to expect. It's such a lovely setting, very suited to opera. I didn't expect pop music" (Focus Group G). Thus, the place was in this case loaded with expectation brought about through past experience. The curator, looking for difference without wishing to lose that place that demonstrated previous success, had not accounted for the level of expectation generated over time.

At the other end of the scale, Conway was not afraid to undertake the seemingly improbably for the first time. Her opening event for the 2009 QMF was held on a grand scale on Thursday Island at the very top of Queensland, beamed live to the city of Brisbane, instead of the other way around, demonstrating her conviction that "the challenge of the Queensland Music Festival is to try and make this vast state feel like it's having a festival all at the same time."

Acknowledging that it is not really possible, Conway nonetheless notes that "symbolically the idea of going up to the northern-most tip where the Festival has never been before, putting a massive — not just a small token — piece up there" really appealed to her. "Something about the logistical challenges really felt to me like we meant it," she claims. "I wanted to say we really mean this, we really want to be there" (personal communication, November 11, 2009).

Hidden Republic, Queensland Music Festival, Thursday Island 2009: Black Arm Band and QYO. Photo by Shannon Gobel, courtesy of QMF.

The message was received, loud and clear. After a return visit since the event, Erica Hart from the QMF acknowledged that locals "recall the effort", and "realise it was very special". Hart also discovered that people from nearby Hammond Island had enjoyed the concert across the water, amplifying the already significant attendance numbers by a few hundred. Sound carries. So do expectations. Now residents on nearby Hammond Island want to be part of this big Queensland festival (Hart, personal communication, May 12, 2010).
As Conway explains it, her very real attempt to make the state believe it was all celebrating at once, the sense of place,

> the sense of remoteness, for me, taking it all up there and then in a very key way beaming that down to the biggest city in the south of Queensland, meant hooking up those two places and saying 'you guys live in the same state — it's almost impossible, but you [do]'! (personal communication, November 11, 2009).

Australian Festival of Chamber Music, Townsville

In the same state which has seen a breadth of new work created in and among communities in places unearthed by the Queensland Music Festival, there is a long-running chamber music festival held each year in the northern city of Townsville. Established by Theodore (Ted) Kuchar in 1991, the Australian Festival of Chamber Music (AFCM) has — despite its title — been distinctively Townsville-based, for good reason. As an American working at the James Cook University, Kuchar invited his musical friends over for their mid-summer holiday, to enjoy a bit of Townsville's tropical 'winter' weather and the Great Barrier Reef, in return for playing a (classical music) concert or two. Under Kuchar's Artistic Direction, the festival attracted many international and Australian musicians for a week (or thereabouts) of ad hoc concerts, mostly held in more conventional venues like Townsville Civic Centre, with an occasional performance in a cathedral.

In this festival, the element of place relates as much to the community as it does to the city itself. In this military and public service city, there is a relatively small but committed arts community, primarily traditional in their musical following, and not well-serviced with performance opportunities. When the festival faltered after Kuchar's departure, that community was determined to sustain 'their' annual classical festival. Eventually they attracted the attention of Piers Lane, beloved expatriot Queensland pianist, with the highest of pedigrees among international artists. Lane became Artistic Director of the AFCM in 2007, and has shifted the nature of the festival, intensifying the quality of the work performed, and spreading performances across a broader range of venues, not all of them in Townsville city.

In 2009, the evening concerts in the Civic Theatre were acclaimed as "of course, the biggest events on the programme" which were "interrupted only for an open-air twilight concert at lovely Alma Bay on nearby Magnetic Island on the Monday" (Tattersall, 2010, p.10). Interruption or not, the annual excursion to Magnetic Island continues.

The festival also now extends its reach to Charters Towers, Mount Isa, Karumba, and Orpheus Island. There was one performance presented in the Riverway Arts Centre, "a choice which seems to have been forced upon the organisers", according to Tattersall (11), and yet which received a "powerful, atmospheric" performance of a premiere of The Past by Andrew Ford. With such success, maybe having been 'forced' into this venue once, the AFCM might come back again in future years.

From these accounts, it is clear that major festivals play a central role in the negotiation between place and performance. While those presented in this cluster each have their own character, there is no mistaking the mark made by Lyndon Terracini on the potential for creating performances in diverse places and ways across Queensland. His Queensland and Brisbane festivals demonstrate the very real relationships that exist between communities and places they know. Whether the place is conventional or non-conventional, if a performance engages the community around it, then they can facilitate transformations of and through place.

Cluster 4: S2M Brisbane-based organisations

Circa
Clocked Out, Topology, Phluxus, Deep Blue

Small-to-medium (S2M) arts organisations play a central role in Brisbane's cultural ecosystem. Generally less supported financially, but also less bound by expectations or major economic imperatives, the hallmark of S2M organisations tends to be their innovative and contemporary interpretation of traditional performing arts across places and audiences, irrespective of whether the focus is circus (Circa), classical dance (Phluxus), orchestral music (Deep Blue), or contemporary music (Clocked Out and Topology). Deep Blue is the largest of the organisations in this cluster with an orchestra of up to thirty predominantly young musicians, and a manager. The creative core of Clocked Out is formed by Erik Griswold and Vanessa Tomlinson; it is the smallest organisation within this cluster, and one which often collaborates with others.

The organisations vary considerably in terms of experience and the funding support they receive through government arts agencies. Circa, Clocked Out and Topology are more established organisations and currently receive operational funding through Arts Queensland and/or the Australia Council for the Arts. Although they do not receive operational funding, Phluxus and Deep Blue have both received Arts Queensland funding to develop specific projects.

Whilst emerging organisations like Phluxus believe having a permanent home would greatly benefit their artistic development, for Clocked Out, whose members are musicians and academics, having a centralised base appears to be less important, and by total contrast, Deep Blue's producer/manager, Darren Clark, believes that a virtual office structure suits the mobile and flexible nature of their work: "We hang onto the notion of keeping it as mobile as possible. Nothing is bolted down. It's how it has always been, and [the performers] don't know anything different" (personal communication, October 9, 2009). However, Clark acknowledges that this approach may create challenges for rehearsals and workshops.

These organisations share an acute awareness that certain venues many of the traits identified by the Cultural Ministers Council in 2002 in a working group report about the sector. In particular, they demonstrate considerable diversity, a commitment to artistic production and a focus on creating new work. Despite minimal access to resources, they were also noted as making a significant contribution to promoting Australia's international cultural profile (Cultural Ministers Council, 2002).

Circa

Circa is a Brisbane-based 'boutique' contemporary circus company resident at the Judith Wright Centre. It began life as the Rock'n'Roll Circus in 1987. Yaron Lifschitz, the current Artistic Director, describes Circa's artistic focus quite specifically: "It's not radical...we don't sacrifice goats or tend to do things in highly unusual spaces to break convention. We just take the basic language of circus and try and make a contemporary artform out of it" (personal communication, December 12, 2008).

With the rebranding of Rock'n'Roll Circus as Circa in 2004 came a conscious decision to pursue a clear artistic direction by creating mainstage work that would be mainly sold to international festivals and receiving venues. Circa also established training centres which offer a range of recreational and professional development courses. In addition to delivering workshops to schools and in regional areas, they offer workshops and create performances for corporate clients and non-corporate partners. Combining so many different elements presents challenges and tensions, but helps to sustain the company financially.

International presenting venues and festivals are Circa's largest markets. According to Lifschitz, local festivals are less enthusiastic about the organisation's unique vision: "If we were doing something that was different in some way, an international collaboration, a big site-specific work, something that we couldn't otherwise do that had currency in place, then they'd be interested to talk to us about it." Highlighting the artistic and commercial factors that Circa needs to consider when creating work, he says "We are doing some programs in the future that are bigger in scope and reach and collaborativeness and other qualities but we don't want to put them together so Brisbane Festival likes them. I mean I hope they do but ... it can't be the driver behind them" (personal communication, December 12, 2008). Lifschitz suggests that this impasse might be overcome by improving the relationship between producers and presenters:

> I mean when I sit down with ... any of the people who run the major institutions in this town ... the level of discourse ... is really about you and me .... it's about this is my patch of turf, this is your patch of turf, do they interact or not ... and that's not a way to get better at what you do or get a better understanding about their needs (personal communication, December 12, 2008).

The critical impetus behind Circa's change of direction in 2004/05 was largely related to financial sustainability and attendances. According to Lifschitz,

> the two opposing camps were: we either put a lot of energy and love into marketing in Brisbane, or we kind of ignore Brisbane for a while, go overseas, try and make our name and build a much longer term audience development, audience base through training people so that there would be thousands of people each year who'd done classes with us. (personal communication, December 12, 2008) Circa adopted the latter option, which Lifschitz describes as "a much more sustainable strategy", designed to build an audience "who knew something about how good the work is in terms of its own language." (personal communication, December 12, 2008)

Describing the difference between local and international audiences, Lifschitz explains, "there's more of [the international audiences] and they tend to stand as soon as the show finishes and applaud wildly." Circa's children's show, 31 Circus Acts, struggled to find an audience at the Judith Wright Centre, yet "We're doing 20 shows in Winnepeg [Canada] middle of next year and … we've got a waiting list of two and a half thousand people … that says it all I think." He believes that this difference can be explained in part by novelty, "I think that it has a lot to do with how people perceive what the work is. I think the lure of the exotic is not limited to Australia. We're very exotic somewhere else but not exotic in our own city" (personal communication, December 12, 2008).

Circa has adopted a number of creative strategies aimed at growing its Brisbane audience. Their training centres have helped to build appreciation of their work and, consequently, an audience for their mainstage shows. To raise awareness of the company, they also continue to seek partnership opportunities with organisations like the State Library, who provide a ready-made audience in opportunities "that [suit] someone else's audience (Lifschitz, personal communication, December 12, 2008). A partnership in what Lifschitz considers "a different universe", saw Circa create 56 performances for a children's exhibition at the Library in January 2009, but such events are not what Circa considers its mainstage work, very little of which is presented in Brisbane.

As part of their funding requirements, Circa undertake a limited amount of touring and deliver workshops in regional Queensland. The workshops tend to be far more popular than their mainstage shows and are a lot cheaper to present, as they doesn't require trucks and stage managers. Former Executive Producer of Circa, Lewis Jones explained that the non-metropolitan reception to their work can vary considerably, "we had a really good response in Toowoomba … strong audience base, strong database and willingness to try a different product. … By contrast Caloundra was not as good" (personal communication, November 6, 2008).

Experiences like this have contributed to Circa's decision to focus on international markets. As Lifschitz explains,

> Our relationship between the work that we make and where we perform is crucial… there's only one currency for the performing arts and that's the number of tickets you sell at the end of the day. … Venues and festivals are the conduit to the people who generally buy our shows … We try as much as possible not to sell tickets to the public … we're not very good at that … we much prefer to sell shows to people who can sell tickets to the public … we've discovered that the right venues for us mostly aren't in Australia and that's ok. (personal communication, December 12, 2008)

He believes that at least some of the challenges Circa faces regarding building a local audience is exacerbated by a lack of leadership and vision in local programming:

> There's been no attempt to grow an audience for other things. ... I think Brisbane really suffers from a lack of that kind of 'look here is a great vision for the future'... if feels like a lot of the stuff is not quite as edgy and interesting as it used to be [when the Powerhouse first started].

Whilst agreeing that contemporary circus is one of the more flexible artforms in terms of venue, Lifschitz argues that this approach is more popular overseas, where "there's very big market for outdoor work and site-specific work. ... Festivals, particularly in Europe, are really into it" (personal communication, December 12, 2008). Creating work that is suitable for the international venue and festival market does not always help Circa to sell their work locally. In fact, Lifschitz believes that it could become an impediment:

> As we become better know and more famous, we also become more expensive and fees in Australia are low anyway but in Brisbane they're especially low so it's very difficult to get somebody to buy a show. And if they don't think they can sell a lot of tickets, and with a local company that's hard, they are probably pretty unlikely to do that. (personal communication, December 12, 2008)

Although not always commissioned to do so, Circa does create work for some local festivals, including the 2009 Brisbane Festival for which Lyndon Terracini programmed a Circa premiere, Joy of Others. This work was performed by aerialist Chelsea McGuffin on the old gasometer at the newly-developed Newstead Riverpark, to a sound score by Lawrence English.

Joy of Others, Circa, 2009. Aerialist Chelsea McGuffin at Newstead Riverpark. Photo by Justin Nicholas, Atmosphere Photography, courtesy of Circa..

Apart from site-specific work for corporate clients or other partners, when Circa performs in Brisbane it tends to be mainly at the Judith Wright Centre; both in the performance space, in their studio, and in the shopfront, a newly opened bijou venue at the space. As Lifschitz explains, "We perform here essentially because there are very few places in Brisbane... that the show will work in and those places have their own curatorial frameworks, artistic philosophies...so we therefore don't tend to do shows there" (personal communication, December 12, 2008).

In addition to commercial and curatorial constraints, Lifschitz also cites aesthetic challenges, "I think that there are limited venues … where our work will look good and physically fit into … I mean the only venues are Judith Wright Centre, QPAC, the Powerhouse theatre, we've even done a season at La Boite at The Roundhouse but there's not a great many theatres in Brisbane." In his opinion, "even if [Brisbane venues] were deeply sympathetic to us they still have the challenge to sell a Brisbane-based company … we know that's really difficult." This situation poses particular challenges for Lifschitz who refers to himself as, "a classical theatre person. I like stage, audience, floor and back wall … I like that relationship. I'm interested in that … I like stages so that's how I tend to make my work" (personal communication, December 12, 2008).

He believes that the lack of suitable venues is compounded by programming decision-making:

> Brisbane needs more spaces than it currently has … I know that the spaces that we have aren't chockers but there's definitely some kind of calculus about the right number of spaces … you also don't want to build a whole lot of white elephants. You build a space like this [the Judith Wright] but you don't have a programming budget to adequately fill them so there's some serious challenges about that … The other set of problems is that power and resources tend to get concentrated into a very few visions … in terms of people who buy shows in Brisbane essentially all the decisions … are made by two men. (personal communication, December 12, 2008)

Further, in his opinion, a lack of resources associated with appropriate infrastructure exacerbates this situation:

> The standard of most of the work in my sector, the physical theatre sector is not very good, and it's not about the people working there, it's just really under-resourced … you know you go to Montreal … and on the steps of the École Nationale, the national circus school..... there's a custom built circus venue but all of this is in the air so there's a standard, a currency which doesn't exist in Brisbane in my sector. (personal communication, December 12, 2008).

Despite such concerns, audience comment about Circa's work at the Judith Wright Centre of Contemporary Arts was favourable. One participant liked the capacity for such a company to make the space their own, and another enjoyed the intimacy of being "right next to them performing" (Focus Group B.2). One participant had experienced Circa's work at both the Judith Wright Centre and The Empire Theatre in Toowoomba, and considered the latter less intimate because "there weren't as many people to create that feeling of atmosphere" (Focus Group B.2). Curiously in this case, there were more people present at the Toowoomba performance than in the Judith Wright theatre, again suggesting that the element of intimacy is linked to density of people present rather than actual number. Being so close to both fellow audience and also the artists adds to the intensity of the experience.

Circa, Furioso. L to R: Jesse Scott, David Carberry, Lachlan McAuley, Emma Serjeant. Photo by Justin Nicholas, Atmosphere Photography

For Circa, carving out a space for non-mainstream work and being dependent on selling a show to relatively few venues is an ongoing challenge according to Lifschitz, "Now we've got … one and a half festivals here so things just get concentrated around powerful charismatic white men essentially … but it's like: Where's that other thing? Where's the danger and craziness and joy and opportunity for something really different to come out?" (personal communication, December 12, 2008).

Whilst Circa has access to a 'home' venue, overseas demand for their work means that they tour extensively. All of the organisations in this cluster need to continually create or adapt their work to a range of performing spaces, a significant challenge that is generally not encountered to the same extent by larger organisations. Restrictions on time available to bump-in a show while touring can impose limitations on how and where an organisation chooses to present its creative work. For organisations like Circa, the security of having a base is important to the creation of their work (if not necessarily presenting that work), and also to running workshops which can contribute to the financial sustainability of the organisation. Where having a base coincides with relatively secure funding, it also allows for a certain level of administrative support.

Topology

Topology's current residency at the Brisbane Powerhouse is a case in point, providing them not only security but also artistic categorisation: the Powerhouse aligns them with innovation and employs them in many collaborative relationships within the centre's artistic brief. Artistic Director of Topology, Robert Davidson explains the match of the Powerhouse as broadening the demographic of their audience: "I think the Brisbane Powerhouse has helped because it's got a scene which is more than just going to a concert. … the whole experience is important" (personal communication, December 15, 2008). The Powerhouse suits much of the repertoire that Topology prefers to play, especially that which incorporate theatrical elements. As Davidson explains, "our presentation mode will move towards that where it's more communicative, more dynamic, more visually engaging" and the Powerhouse holds more potential for flexibility than other spaces in which Topology has worked.

Davidson wants to "be able to move around more and to not be locked on one spot because of microphones, … to interact more" and this fits the Powerhouse well. The Powerhouse is also prepared to bring in a grand piano for their work. "One of the biggest problems is having a piano, because our pianist doesn't really want to play on an electric piano, funnily enough," explains Davidson, describing the benefit of being able to present their preferred repertoire at the Powerhouse (personal communication, December 15, 2008).

Beyond the Powerhouse, Topology performs in a variety of places, including a residency at Ric's Cafe, a nightclub in Fortitude Valley, but place and its possibilities tend to dictate the choice of program. As further explanation, Davidson adds, "A club set would be on synth". Still, whilst acknowledging a preference for an audience in silent mode to appreciate the many subtle effects of their music, Davidson admits to programming variety, even at the Powerhouse: "We have used the Turbine Platform in interesting ways sometimes, by using the height — you can go up onto the balcony or you can go down below, and we've done some performances with Terry Riley music when he was out here in 2006, [using] all the different levels" (personal communication, December 15, 2008).

Taking a very different approach, Deep Blue challenges the traditional notion of an orchestra by making performing spaces informal and accessible. A Deep Blue performance will not have a conductor, music stands and other such vestiges of traditional performance. Having memorised what they are to play, performers have the flexibility to move or to take unexpected stances (occasionally even on stilts!). Depending on the venue, these unexpected episodes might occur among the audience (Andy Arthurs, personal communication, May 30, 2010). Venues like the Roundhouse Theatre allow Deep Blue the option of performing close to the audience and interacting with them; while performing at Woodford allowed dancing near the stage.

Deep Blue performs in a diversity of venues, seeking to avoid those that have barriers to audience accessibility, such as car parking costs and other expenses, minimum dress standards, or inflexibility in set-ups. The company employs proactive strategies to engage the audience. Before each Deep Blue performance takes place, the organisation has already established a relationship with young local musicians to ensure that there are opportunities for them to be involved. Workshops might take place at the venue. If this is not possible, they may use the foyer or even the car park, neither of which is always ideal. This inclusive style of engagement attracts a broad audience, including people who might not otherwise consider attending.

Building on this engagement, Deep Blue endeavours to break down other traditional barriers by actively soliciting audience interaction and feedback during the performance — factors which encourage families, especially those with small children, to attend. Early in 2008, their performance of deepblue — the preview transformed the traditional expectations of a performance place (the Playhouse at QPAC) by having the venue staff dress out of uniform, and allowing the audience to bring drinks into the space (Arthurs, personal communication, June 1, 2010). Whatever the venue and their adaptation of it, the performers' use of it is far from standard.

Deep Blue. Photo by Fiona Cullen, courtesy of Deep Blue.

Despite such moves away from the traditional, the company acknowledges that there are often trade-offs between technical facilities and achieving a level of informality (Darren Clark, personal communication, October 9, 2009). Although people who participated in the focus groups had not experienced Deep Blue, they did consider venues that were child-friendly and provided space for younger audiences to move around to be more relaxing for children, parents and other audience members (Focus groups C.1; D.1; E; H).

All of these S2M organisations have presented work in alternative venues either for commercial reasons and also in some cases to experiment within their artform. For example, Circa has been commissioned to create and present work at Darling Harbour in Sydney. Clocked Out chose to develop site-specific works based on local traditions for the Wivenhoe and Condamine areas of regional Queensland, highlighting the specific characteristics of these places (such as the Condamine Bells). As already noted, Topology has performed in non-conventional venues including public spaces within the Brisbane Powerhouse, small venues in Fortitude Valley and historic regional cinemas for one-off events.

Although focus group participants recalled memorable outdoor performances often in spectacular settings, they repeatedly mentioned the attraction of experiencing small-scale performing arts events and especially theatre staged within the intimacy of small venues. The Brisbane Powerhouse was one of the only venues which was described as a "destination", somewhere you would go to see a performance, but maybe also simply because it was seen as somewhere that always had something happening and lots of people around. This description is similar to how multi-day festivals were perceived by focus group participants (Focus groups B.2; D.2).

While Phluxus has performed in spaces like Canberra's Old Parliament House, having safe dance flooring is an important issue and determines their performance to some extent. Not all venues have tolerated their use of interesting props, such as egg shells, but Phluxus will either find ways to work around this or channel their innovation into using conventional spaces in interesting ways, especially in engaging the audience. In The Opposite of Prompt, a work Phluxus created for the Judith Wright Centre, the audience was seated on stage while the performance took place in and around the chairs, specifically to disrupt any pre-conceived expectation. For some people who took part in the focus groups, particularly those who were artists themselves, devices that "shift the audience's perception" and "put you off your guard" enhanced their experience of a performance (Focus group B.2).

Performing in different venues can bring new audiences but it requires adopting a tailored approach, while work specific to place often brings greater logistical headaches. For example, Circa's performances for children at the State Library of Queensland needed to be suitable for the age group and required rigging designed especially for a non-purpose built space. For performances outdoors, Clocked Out has been conscious of the acoustic limitations and logistical challenges. It has also become aware that the local community is more likely to attend if the ensemble engages and works with them in the period leading to the performance. Their site-specific performance piece Sounding the Condamine (2009) engaged the local community by inviting them to bring and play their various bells in a tribute to the Condamine bell of the late nineteenth century. As Vanessa Tomlinson explains,

> We also try and find key figures in the community who can be part of the performance. … in the Condamine situation, there's an interesting bush poet called Condamine Jack. He's about 90 years old now and he's been writing about that region for a long time so he'll be reading some of his poems and we'll be setting some of them to music, so again there's a really elemental community link. (personal communication, October 10, 2008)

Topology appreciate the opportunity to reach new audiences at venues like the Brisbane Powerhouse, where people may be there for one purpose but open to other encounters, especially free events. Although some of its work has cultural relevance to Indigenous communities, its performances do not generally attract an Indigenous audience. Despite filming Aunty Ruth recounting her story of the Stolen Generations in Ruth Portrait, and involving other Indigenous people in its preparation, Robert Davidson notes that "there's always more white faces than black faces in the audience but I guess that's the social scene of where we are, sadly or otherwise" (personal communication, December 15, 2008). The dearth of Indigenous people may be because an Indigenous audience is not the target market, or simply as Davidson suggests, that "a lot of Aboriginal people aren't necessarily interested in going along to listen to chamber music" (personal communication, December 15, 2008). Whatever the reason, the result is consistent with Terracini's view that Western venues are unlikely to attract Indigenous people.

A striking outcome of this cluster is the strong pull towards conventional places: most all of the organisations in this cluster have come out of a classical tradition and appreciate the acoustic and other technical facilities offered by major purpose-built venues. Vanessa Tomlinson compares what she calls her "impoverished" sound created in the natural environment with that in a concert hall where "you can communicate quite a lot of detail to [the audience] because it's a great acoustic" (personal communication, October 10, 2008). All of the S2M organisations share a belief that these venues should be available to more performing arts organisations and audiences. However, Circa and Phluxus also highlighted Brisbane's lack of artform-specific venues for physical arts and dance respectively.

At the same time, most of the organisations in this cluster acknowledge that some people might feel uncomfortable in formal venues and have adopted strategies to adapt their performance and at times also the space in which they perform.

Offering workshops appears to be an effective strategy for engaging and building audiences of all ages. Although 'middle position' Brisbane Powerhouse and the Judith Wright Centre are both venues at which these organisations have enjoyed performing, limited venue flexibility and availability of venues is sometimes seen as problematic because of challenges related to physical layout, size and philosophy of programming. Finally, developing site-specific work is seen as challenging but rewarding.

Cluster 5: S2M regional organisations

Tropic Sun with Theatre to the Edge

While urban-based small-to-medium organisations have a specific set of opportunities and challenges in terms of their relationship to place, this is even more pronounced for those located outside the Queensland capital. The organisations in this cluster reflect the same strong commitment to artistic production and focus on creating new work as their Brisbane-based counterparts. However, a regional base adds the imperative to develop efficient strategies to maximise the impact and reach of performances despite minimal access to resources and limited availability and geographical spread of audiences and suitable venues.

The S2M organisations within this regional cluster are based at various centres across far north Queensland. JUTE (Cairns), Tropic Sun (now Full Throttle Theatre Company, Townsville), and Crossroad Arts (Mackay) were all members of the Theatre to the Edge (TttE) partnership, a regional touring network that included home venues, NARPACA venues and other spaces. Dancenorth in Townsville is a contemporary dance organisation which also toured into the TttE venues and represents the largest organisation within the cluster. JUTE, Crossroad Arts and Dancenorth currently receive operational funding through Arts Queensland and/or the Australia Council. At the end of 2009 Arts Queensland announced a new state-wide touring strategy, Coming to a Place Near You, and funding has been withdrawn from the TttE initiative. Under this new strategy JUTE and Full Throttle Theatre Company will tour a selection of productions to regional Queensland in 2010.

JUTE

At a time when regional Queensland boasted very few professional theatre companies, Just Us Theatre Ensemble (JUTE) was established in 1992 by Suellen Maunder, Kathryn Ash and Susan Prince in the northern city of Cairns. From the outset, JUTE has aspired to produce contemporary work by regional writers, to develop professional skills, and to encourage local arts activity. While its primary ambition was to produce contemporary theatre, JUTE incorporated more traditional and commercial product into its programs to ensure viability. Some of these featured place as a distinguishing factor. Shakespeare in the Park was a well-attended annual event regularly staged at the Cairns Botanic Gardens and other outdoor locations in Kuranda, Port Douglas and the historic Paronella Park, a popular tourist attraction. Despite their popularity, these outdoor events were dependent on favourable weather and consequently carried a financial risk. Even more pronouncedly mercantile imperatives underpinned JUTE's choice to create work which would function as entertainment in local shopping centres.

For its first twelve years, JUTE did not enjoy a permanent base, instead presenting their performances and workshops at a variety of venues in Cairns. Some of these venues were owned or supported by community or Council, and could therefore offer subsidised rates.

The Civic Theatre, owned and operated by Cairns City Council, provided occasional in-kind support for larger-scale performances. More often, JUTE used smaller venues such as the Rondo Theatre, the home of Cairns' community theatre group; Graft'n'Arts, a centre that received Council support; or the Tanks Arts Centre, a Council-owned venue which also provided JUTE with a temporary home in 1996. To reach a wider audience, initiatives like Kabaret Kamikaze were developed to showcase short works presented in local cafés, venues that were cheap or free and informal, but offered little security of tenure. Thus the lack of a 'home venue' inspired — by needs — a flexibility in the design and delivery of performances.

Being constantly on the move may have widened JUTE's reach, but especially in the years before online social networking, it did not necessarily develop a strong stable home audience on which it could rely. According to one Cairns focus group participant, having to look out for posters to find out about an upcoming performance meant that it was more "hit and miss" as to whether the audience attended or not (Focus Group D.1).

JUTE acknowledges that a high profile venue such as the Cairns Civic Theatre attracted, and could accommodate, larger audience numbers. However, securing suitable and affordable performance venues presented difficulties for the company. On more than one occasion, performances were cancelled when theatres suddenly withdrew their support, or rehearsals were interrupted when theatres became unavailable because of other commitments. Suellen Maunder describes this period:

> We have performed in the back of a groovy shop that they've cleaned out for us and created a theatre space. We've performed in the Cairns Civic Theatre, we've performed at Graft'n'Arts — very basic cement-floored tin shed-type venues … and all that was pretty exciting in the growth of the company but let me tell you, it was a lot of hard work and I don't think I'd like to take the company back there because I think while that was exciting in terms of finding these other venues and turning them into theatre spaces, it actually meant that the company was put under a lot of strain and I think a lot of young companies deal with that. (personal communication, January 27, 2009)

From 1997, JUTE expressed a desire for a permanent 'dedicated' venue where it could create and present work. Co-locating with other arts organisations at Tanks Arts Centre had allowed them to share resources, but this was always a temporary arrangement subject to ongoing Council support, and not being centrally located also meant that there were difficulties with audience accessibility. In 2001 the State Government announced a $2.7m capital works grant for the construction of a Centre of Contemporary Arts (CoCA) to house JUTE and Kick Arts.

Centre of Contemporary Arts in Cairns. Photo by Karen Trist, 2009.

During the CoCA construction phase, JUTE continued to use a range of venues largely dependent on the availability of funding. In 2001 JUTE developed a community production for the contemporary arts festival, Fed on Arts, funded as part of the Centenary of Federation celebrations. This event involved over 200 professional and amateur performers and multiple performances that took the audience through the streets of Cairns, onto a train and into the old cemetery. Unfortunately the overwhelmingly popularity of the event did not translate into ticket sales, not uncommon for outdoor events.

From 2003, JUTE received funding to organise Sunday in the City play readings: a collaboration between JUTE, Cairns Civic Theatre, Regional Gallery and the library, with the objective of animating the city centre on the second Sunday of each month.

In 2004, JUTE moved into its new home at CoCA, a space that comprises administration offices, meeting rooms, a theatre, rehearsal space, and gallery space. In the annual report of that year, Kathryn Ash described this momentous event for the organisation:

> The company began its new life in a beautiful new theatre at CoCA in March. JUTE has never had its own theatre and the effects of this development, both extremely positive and also challenging, were heavily felt throughout the year … JUTE has spent almost 12 years without a fixed location for performances and events. Loyal patrons have spent that time following JUTE around from venue to venue. (JUTE, Annual Report 2004)

According to Ash, moving to a central location also attracted a new audience for JUTE:

> Along with our loyal patrons, the new theatre is beginning to attract a new section of the community: those who do not normally go to the theatre, or if they do, they traditionally seek out shows and events held only in established local theatres. They are generally speaking higher profile citizens, business owning, and influential within their circle or community … JUTE has broadened its appeal. (ibid)

Suellen Maunder believes that finally having access to a purpose-built facility not only extended JUTE's audience, but also alleviated some of the production constraints imposed by other venues:

> Before JUTE had its own theatre we produced one or two shows per year. The productions varied in production values depending on the venue for the performance. Productions at the Cairns Civic Theatre needed to fill a relatively large proscenium theatre while productions built into the back of a retro city shop seating only 50 people on scaffold stalls called for a different level of production … Presenting contemporary theatre, particularly new work from regional writers, in a small regional centre does not in itself bring in hordes of mainstream audiences flocking to our doors but when those doors are in spaces that people do not even recognise as theatre it is more difficult. (personal communication, January 27, 2009)

Having a venue to fill with a season of plays, however, also subtly changes the way the company programs, and according to Maunder, the 'bums on seats' factor becomes more of a priority: "It means I have to consider variety". It is worth noting that in 2009, Arts Queensland began a review of alternative models for the management and programming for the CoCA.

In the same year that JUTE moved into the CoCA, they received the Playlab Award for "outstanding commitment to developing and presenting Queensland stories and promoting a regional voice" and their artistic vision became increasingly focused on creating distinctively regional work, written and performed by regional theatre practitioners. With their growing success, JUTE's attention shifted to devising strategies to sustain an annual performance and touring program that could operate alongside the existing more mainstream touring program.

According to Suellen Maunder, JUTE's Artistic Director, "for me it's about having a diversity of voices that can enrich theatre" (personal communication, January 27, 2010).

Tours through the Theatre to the Edge (TttE) initiative had begun by 2006 and each participating performing arts organisation needed to create work that could be adapted to the available venues in each location. As Maunder explains:

> When we go to other places, we are driven by TttE which is about touring into each other's companies so wherever that other company works from that's where we tour into. JUTE is a 248 seat beautifully built four year old theatre … Tropic Sun Theatre … is an old courthouse so it's an historical building so it has all of those thing that you can't touch … In Mackay, there's two places that we go to; there's the Mackay Entertainment Centre — [a] huge venue, something like 1,000 seat theatre in that main auditorium, and we go from producing in there to Crossroad Arts Theatre which is basically a hall … And then over to either Darwin Entertainment Centre or Browns Mart … an old community theatre (personal communication, January 27, 2010).

Although Maunder agrees that theatre is a flexible artform which can be presented almost anywhere, she also believes in a place for the 'box':

> I think the place where you perform can be any place; it just depends on the level of energy and resources you have to create a magic around those places … So all things are possible but I would hate to see theatres struck off the list because they're considered an old-fashioned form…Extraordinary things can happen because you have a black box and a lighting rig and a sound system…There's something else that takes place within an audience, not just in the relationship between the performer and the audience, but between the audience as a whole. (personal communication, January 27, 2010)

Despite recent uncertainty about CoCA's management, Suellen Maunder argues that "the beauty of having our own venue, the JUTE Theatre in Cairns, means that can very clearly identify that space as our space". JUTE acknowledges the importance of the venue to the local theatre community and claims that it "creates important opportunities for JUTE to provide support to emerging independent professional producers in the region" (personal communication, January 27, 2009).

Maunder believes that audiences also develop a relationship with a particular venue and come to associate it with a certain level of facilities and performance:

> So it means that whenever we produce work there, our audience can always rely on a certain amount of the holistic nature of attending a production. They know that we'll have friendly front-of-house people, they know that it'll be a groovy environment that they're coming to, they know the quality of the seating, and it'll be an air-conditioned venue, they know all of those things and that they can get a drink at the bar. All of those things are standard, they're solid, they know what to expect. And then the production comes on top of that. The production might be something that is very challenging or it might be a comedy, or it might be a whole range of things and that will be a different part of the experience but they know that they can rely on those other things, and it's been very easy to build our audience from that venue because it's absolutely steeped in our identity. (personal communication, January 27, 2009)

Amenities might enhance the experience, but Maunder suggest that audiences are also attracted to the content:

> Well because I'm a founding member of the company I have seen the changing audiences over the years and I guess when JUTE first started we were a fairly feminist, 'out there', issue-based theatre company … I think our audiences used to be a lot more alternative than what they are now. I think we now have a mix of alternative loyal audiences and building a mainstream audience. (personal communication, January 27, 2009)

Macbeth by William Shakespeare, adapted and directed by Scott Witt. A JUTE production, 2010. Designer Dominie Hooper. Actors L to R: Christopher Glover, Liz Hurley, Andrew Finlay, (up pole) Theresa O'Connor, (Ned Kelly/Macbeth) Peter Marshall, Sue Hayes, Andy Lamb, Chris Ahgee. Photo by Romy Photography, courtesy of JUTE.

Audience members who participated in focus groups confirm that JUTE's performances work well in CoCA, in no small part due to JUTE's creativity in the use of the space. Focus group participants also commented on the appropriateness of the space for other small-scale theatre and music events that require a more intimate setting combined with technical and production facilities of high quality. Referring to the recent touring production of The Kirsk, one participant said it was "in your face, riveting", and this atmosphere could not have been achieved in the Cairns Civic Theatre. There was also reference to CoCA as suited to "contemporary performance [because] it's not quite so structured, it's a little more fun". Some suggested that the sound engineering and production capabilities exceeded those at the older and larger Civic Centre. Focus group participants also commented on the importance of friendly front-of-house staff who make people feel appreciated, and facilities such as a bar or coffee shop that enable discussion after a performance.

JUTE prides itself on attracting a younger audience, which Maunder believes results from developing relationships with schools and young people and providing opportunities for those young people to engage with the company in different ways:

> I think school matinees are one thing where a teacher or school organises everything … So they get into the audience and yes they enjoy it but it's a whole different thing, and I think that one of the things that's happened is we offer cheap night Tuesdays so when the schools can't come as a matinee because of other commitments, drama teachers will actually bring groups of their drama students and they'll all dress up and they'll all be part of the normal audience and it's a completely different environment for them, and they actually get to understand what you have to do at an interval when there's a whole bunch of people standing around, not just their school mates. (personal communication, January 27, 2009)

As a means of re-connecting with people who hadn't attended the theatre for some time Sarah Flenley, a former General Manager at JUTE, introduced an audience development initiative based on Talking Theatre. Part of this initiative was aimed at addressing practicalities by providing venue information about parking and where to buy tickets, but it also attempted to engage audiences. People were asked to provide feedback about the performance as well as aspects of marketing such as brochure and poster design. According to Flenley, this has resulted in 50 to 60 per cent of these people returning to see their performances. She believes that by forming a strong connection, people are more likely to trust JUTE's programming. They also actively engage with schools by bringing students in for matinees and 'cheap night Tuesday' performances.

Flenley emphasised the importance of finding ways to engage with people. Inspired by an audience development program, Not for the Likes of You, she tries to imagine

> JUTE theatre as a train … and leaving as many doors open as you can for people to get on that train and what a lot of people do is just keep the one door open or put one poster or flyer out and say "that's how you need to get on". So that's what I've been trying to do, is to create as many doors open as I can for people to access the theatre. (personal communication, November 14, 2008)

Theatre to the Edge (TttE)

Interviews with the Theatre to the Edge (TttE) network and Dancenorth show a clear overlap between venue, content and sustainability. Under this touring model, local performing arts organisations produced and presented their own work for mainly regional audiences largely through their own network of venues. This partnership approach emerged out of frustration with accessing larger, more mainstream (NARPACA) venues, but has resulted in a rich seam of new creative work and the development of the skills and networks all of the organisations involved.

Presenting work in a range of venues may have developed the resourcefulness of these organisations in adapting performances and sets to a variety of venues but it has also required an extremely flexible and minimalist approach. When the TttE organisations began to tour into each other's venues, they gained experience in creating portable work and the ability to design productions that only required adaptation for a limited number of familiar venues.

Having a secure base has been important for all of these organisations in the creation and presentation of their work. For JUTE in particular, there is a sense that having a base enhances the quality of the performances and makes it less likely to lead to staff burn-out. Ensuring that audiences can find them is an issue for all these organisations, and to some extent this has been confirmed by audiences during the focus groups.

Steve Mayer-Miller, Artistic Director of Crossroad Arts, the smallest and arguably the most mobile of these organisations, suggested that when they moved to a location further from the centre of Mackay, it took a considerable amount of time for audiences to find them and adopt it as a venue (personal communication, February 9, 2009). Perhaps it is a mark of audience response to place that the second venue is less than two kilometres from the centre of this sprawling city.

JUTE believes that its audience growth is partially attributable to being identified with a 'quality' venue that offers a particular environment in terms of front-of-house staff, comfortable seating, air-conditioning and a bar. Focus group participants agree, although with less endorsement of Maunder's claim that audience can rely on such services. Lack of venue resources and management decisions may impact on the provision of some foyer services. The CoCA potential is not always realised, if some feedback from focus group participants is to be believed. "They haven't capitalised on the foyer and what can happen there," said one, and another added: "They've got a terrific cafe which is closed most of the time, and I think it has an impact on where there are performances and it's not open" (Focus Group D.2). Nonetheless, there was a general endorsement of one participant's comment that the smaller venues "have an ambience which adds to the place" (Focus Group D.2).

All of the TttE organisations concede that it does take more energy to produce work 'outside the box' and do not necessarily believe that it enhances the work. However it has played a part in their development and allowed them to attract large audiences for one-off community events, and to take risks that wouldn't be possible in a conventional theatre venue.

Non-mainstream venues have allowed Crossroad Arts to experiment with more contemporary multimedia work. One recent work, *Synchronicity*, was projected against the exteriors of buildings in and around Mackay as part of a city-wide festival. Based on his experience with Crossroad Arts, Steve Mayer-Miller believes that, in general, younger audiences are more attracted to these non-mainstream performances in unconventional spaces, but content and venues are often inter-related.

Crossroad Arts: Synchronicity screening, Annette Tesoriero. Photo by Karen Trist, 2009.

Working 'outside the box' has also enabled many of the TttE organisations to create work with groups they couldn't otherwise engage. Examples include some of JUTE's earlier work with Indigenous communities, and the strong artistic and social relationships Crossroad Arts has forged with Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, and South Sea Islander communities.

While some of these performances have worked best outside conventional theatre spaces, Mayer-Miller described other performances where certain communities have taken immense pride in seeing work they have helped create being showcased at a large mainstream theatre.

Crossroad Arts often chooses to work in community partnerships and has embraced alternative venues to reach specific audiences. Mayer-Miller has worked with communities in mining towns and with street kids to create performances in venues that are easily accessible, suit the content and are familiar to audiences. The organisation has also created plays with Indigenous actors and in dialect broadcast on Indigenous radio, capable of reaching a huge audience base. Unlike the experience of Topology, Crossroad Arts has attracted an Indigenous audience at times, something Mayer Miller attributes to their close ties with these communities: "Certainly with TttE, when we went up to Townsville there was a lot of Indigenous and South Sea Islanders who came to see the show; they know about us" (personal communication, February 9, 2009).

Dancenorth

Dancenorth is a contemporary dance organisation which has formed partnerships with and toured work into TttE venues. Like the TttE organisations, it has access to its own venue, which it concedes would be unlikely if it were based in a larger city. However, Dancenorth rarely performs outside a theatre venue with a sprung floor because of the potential risk of injury. Over the past twelve months, this company has invited the community inside its venue for a program of dance workshops, which have been very well-attended.

Dancenorth has also opened its venue to other local and regional arts organisations, exhibitions and events which it believes have attracted a broader, cross-over audience. Workshops and/or community partnerships have also been an effective audience and community development tool for all of these organisations, and having access to a space to foster this engagement has been critical to this strategy. A recent performance by a Torres Strait dance company evolved into a festival, attracting the local Torres Strait Islander community, which would not normally attend this venue. As Joanne Fisher explains, "We targeted them to come as much as we could. It's not necessarily an easy audience to attract as you know; [this is] a very white space" (personal communication, November 26, 2009). Like JUTE, Dancenorth considers that having access to a venue with a bar and space where the audience can socialise after a performance extends and enriches the experience for its patrons. To some extent this is reinforced by feedback from focus groups where many people stressed the social aspects of attending a performance, particularly the theatre. Feeling that they were being 'herded' in and out without an opportunity to share or contemplate the experience was a significant turn-off for many participants.

This cluster presents insights into both the opportunities and the drawbacks for a company of not having a home base, and producing performances across a range of places. Focus groups participants in this cluster expressed an astute appreciation of the effect of place and venues in relation to performance. People frequently mentioned their delight in attending outdoor performances such as Shakespeare in the Park where they could make the space their own, at the same time acknowledging the power of other performances within a conventional theatre setting. For small-scale performing arts events and especially theatre, the 'intimacy' of small venues and its ability to heighten experience was a common theme across all focus groups. Although larger theatres were often described as lacking atmosphere, they were endorsed as suitable for large-scale works, especially if they could provide high-level technical facilities and/or the capacity to bring a large number of people together.

Cluster 6: Community-focused festivals

Woodford Folk Festival
The Dreaming, Laura Dance Festival, Stylin'UP

Although there is considerable overlap (see Cluster 3), *Redefining Places for Art* distinguishes between festivals that primarily focus on bringing new and exciting content (or existing content into new and exciting places) on one hand, and festivals that coalesce around a strong sense of 'community.' People are attracted to these events through shared values, through their identification with a specific cultural group, or a combination of the two. The festivals in this cluster are located outside of Queensland urban centres and have become strongly identified with a particular place. A rural property outside Woodford is the site of the Woodford Folk Festival and The Dreaming; the Laura Dance Festival takes place on Indigenous land outside a small country town in far north Queensland; and Stylin'UP is located in Inala, an outer suburb of Brisbane with a large Indigenous population.

Of the two oldest festivals, the Woodford Folk Festival (formerly the Maleny Folk Festival) began in 1987 while the Laura Dance Festival has been running for just over 30 years (although as the festival claims, it is based on Indigenous traditions extending back tens of thousands of years). Accounts vary, but according to one source, the Laura Festival began life as the Cape York Aboriginal Dance Festival in the early 1980s (Henry, 2000, p. 324). Stylin'UP and The Dreaming began in 2001 and 2005 respectively. These festivals receive varying levels of financial support through the Australia Council for the Arts, Arts Queensland and/or Brisbane City Council. Each challenges preconceptions about place and performance in its own way.

Woodford Folk Festival

In 1987, the inaugural Woodford Folk Festival was held in Maleny, a small town that combines the rural and alternative in the Sunshine Coast hinterland, just over one hour's drive north of Brisbane. For Bill Hauritz, the current Festival Director, and other long-time members of the Queensland Folk Federation, the original idea behind the first festival was to increase the popularity of the folk movement, but it has burgeoned into one of the biggest 'world music' festivals in the southern hemisphere. With over 160,000 visitors a year travelling for at least one hour, paying a substantial entry fee, and frequently braving a muddy site, it challenges preconceived notions of accessibility, affordability, and comfort.

Although the festival now boasts a staggering diversity of music and other performing arts, the idea of folk 'lore' remains central and underpins how people — organisers, audiences and performers — are brought together at Woodford. Bill Hauritz describes lore as "more a common system of how we operate … a folk expression, an expression of the common people … it still comes back to that search for lore and those people interested in culture in the raw sense of the word, almost in the community sense of the word" (personal communication, April 21, 2009).

The ethos of 'lore' as an expression of the common folk, together with the desire to achieve a large degree of financial and organisational independence, have been critical factors in organising and presenting a festival largely with volunteer assistance. As Hauritz explained, "we were very conscious right from the start to try and build within our group a culture that enabled a self-empowerment view of how we operate and how we collect our funds, and I think that's done us a great turn over the years" (personal communication, April 21, 2009).

Achieving financial sustainability and attracting and retaining a committed volunteer base are seen as critical to creating a community-focused festival that has the capacity to pay a large number of performers year after year. These factors have also strongly influenced the shape of this festival. According to Hauritz, "Our idea was to put it all together in one place where there was one entrance in and one ticket price which would cover all events, and that way the organisers were in charge of their own economy and their own future" (personal communication, April 21, 2009).

This model grew out of earlier festivals initiated by the Folk Federation including The Medieval Fayre, an event held in inner Brisbane which served as a fund-raiser for the organisation as well as a showcase of folk talent. One of the many benefits of enclosing a festival space includes giving the audience the feeling that they are part of a festival. Hauritz argues that, "If you have a festival in the city with some parts in the Valley and some parts in East Brisbane … you don't know where the festival is … it doesn't really feel like it's a festival" (personal communication, April 21, 2009).

According to Hauritz, "it's not necessarily the type of music that belongs to one location but developing a location where the audience has a relationship with the performance or the art." Since its inception, there has always been a strong environmental element to the Woodford festival. Des Ritchie, Chair of the Queensland Folk Federation, describes Maleny, the town where the first festival occurred, as "the heart and soul of environmentalism" in this area. This belief continues to be reflected in the festival programming, philosophy and how it develops the site, and may contribute to the type of audience that the festival attracts. Concern for the land and an abiding interest in the 'lore' of other cultures appear to have also played a part in the Folk Federation's support of The Dreaming festival.

Finding, owning and creating a place capable of fostering all of their aspirations (economic, 'lore' and community) has been fundamental to the Folk Federation festivals. While Hauritz believes that their model could be applied to other sites, including QPAC or the South Bank parklands, he acknowledges that the cost would probably be prohibitive. Even the cost of buying the Woodford site has been a huge financial burden on the organisation. Whether urban sites would have the same romantic appeal is doubtful, although Hauritz claims that "the romance in that sense of a site … I think that should be captured in any place" (personal communication, April 21, 2009).

Emphasising the pragmatic decisions behind selecting the Woodford venue, Hauritz believes that "it had to have some unique qualities … and what makes that festival [site] unique is that … there's a big hill here so sound cannot escape so we're able to have privacy in our own little valley so that was one of the things we were looking for; neighbours and sound, the natural environment". Amanda Jackes, Woodford's General Manager raises the practical importance of finding a site that was large enough to grow with the festival but she is also effusive about the aesthetic qualities of the site and describes the Woodford amphitheatre as 'magical' (personal communication, March 17, 2009). Jackes also believes that the festival has become rooted in place and the benefits of owning the site outweigh the financial risk:

> The festival has a home, has a place, you know, the festival's abbreviated to "Woodford" which is a location, and that's very much a big important part of it. People will come as a pilgrimage, as a journey to this place, so it's very important. Our festival would be different if we were renting a site, there's no doubt about that. (personal communication, March 17, 2009)

For Hauritz, "It's not the place that gives that special feeling … the place is a value-added extra that gives us a place where we cannot whinge about the environment being destroyed we can actually do something about it." However, he does acknowledge a significant connection between 'lore' and the festival site: "The physical place has changed because of the nature of our growth and the economy and our success. The spirit that we operate and the reasons that we operate haven't altered at all I don't think" (personal communication, April 21, 2009).

Unlike many festivals, the audience is made up of the paying audience combined with large numbers of volunteers, many of whom are also performing artists. A wide variety of volunteers are intimately involved in the planning and delivery of the festival, and also help to organise and participate in related events run throughout the year including The Planting. This tree planting program also offers Woodford-style entertainment which helps to attract a paying audience as well. Hauritz suggests that these events foster "that broad sense of ownership within the festival (and) is a critical part of its existence." Informal interviews conducted with volunteers seem to confirm that this feeling is shared by the majority of volunteers.

While he doesn't believe that all volunteers feel the same way, Hauritz acknowledges "that sense of ownership of a place we're calling Woodfordia … is very powerful and strong. It's the reason why people don't put rubbish down on the streets … I think that ownership is the reason for that" (personal communication, April 21, 2009). Volunteering opportunities and alternative transport arrangements also help to make the festival more financially and geographically accessible. Not only does the Queensland Folk Federation encourage feedback and suggestions from volunteers, it has also conducted a visitors' survey that includes paying audience, volunteers and performers.

These surveys have provided the festival organisers with basic social and demographic information about the audience, as well as feedback; all of which is used to shape the festival programming. Based on these responses, contemporary music and comedy events have been expanded to draw a younger crowd, and family-friendly events, like the children's festival, have also grown. Focus group feedback indicates that the Woodford audience often describe themselves as people who love the outdoors, and enjoy being in an environment that is relaxed, with 'like-minded' people, and not in smoky or noisy venues. "I think the landscape lends itself really well to the acoustic," said one, and another affirmed that "the place had a lot to contribute … You felt you were in the bush, or just on the edge of the bush." The sense of living onsite was like "being in a world which is quite unique", "more comfortable [because] we're all in tents, living here, all have muddy feet, and [there's a] diversity of ages and people" (Focus Group H).

Other focus group participants who had attended Woodford expressed similar responses. In one group, the Woodford fire festival on New Year's Eve was described as symbolising the interaction between performance, community and the environment. It was agreed that for this event, the location is central to making the experience unique:

> You are tying yourself into the land; you're wet, you're muddy, there's fire on you, you're feeling it, you're smelling it, you're seeing it. There are actors, musicians. It starts so small and builds up and up into a crescendo. Then you have to walk out through the mud, through the dark. You can't find your way unless you follow lots of people. It's not like it's a parking lot [outside] a theatre. (Focus Group H)

Woodford Folk Festival. Photo courtesy Queensland Folk Federation.

Hauritz's personal view is that it is the calibre and number of performers that are critical in attracting the audience, not the physical location, but he concedes that location does play a role. According to Jackes, "People describe Woodford as a pilgrimage. At the end of the year it's a journey that they go to after the year and they're going back for those rituals and ceremonies". She also believes that their enjoyment is enhanced because

> the site is located away from people's everyday routines and the fact that they can live here for six days … When you go to a theatre performance in a conventional theatre space…as soon as the show is finished, its impact on you is starting to be dissolved because of your reunification with your everyday lifestyle, the routines that we all have. (personal communication, March 17, 2009)

This cluster reveals a complex relationship between place and performance which incorporates culture, commercial decision-making and audience involvement to links with environmental and/or Indigenous issues. For a festival like Woodford, creating a site which looks and is 'green' is important to their ethos and their reputation for environmental responsibility, but it also attracts more punters than a bare field. Providing opportunities to live and work on the site during and beyond the festival also appears to have reinforced the connection between audiences, festival events and place.

Laura Dance Festival

Although the Laura Dance Festival, The Dreaming, and Stylin'UP are all Indigenous festivals, the nature of cultural meanings and attachment to place seems to vary between festivals and audiences. While it is particularly strong for Laura, where there is an abiding association with the land, it is an element that is still evolving for The Dreaming and Stylin'UP.

According to Jeremy Geia, Artistic Director of the Laura Dance Festival, this festival is a modern corroboree or gathering where various communities or clans from the Cape York come together not only to talk and dance, but to keep culture alive in an event which celebrates that culture (personal communication, 10 February, 2010). This has evolved over its long history through a gradual shift from a distinctive government presence in early Laura festivals to current events which defer responsibility to the traditional owners of the country in which the festival ground is located, and who are now its hosts.

Audience members respond to this special sense of place: "The natural spectacle enhances the performance," said one, and another suggested that "in a theatre, [Laura] would lose its authenticity" (Focus Group D.2). Although performances at The Dreaming showcase Australian and international indigenous traditions, cultural traditions appear to be more closely embedded in place at Laura, due in part to historical differences. As Henry explains, "The [Laura] festival is a means of celebrating a shared Aboriginal identity based on a common history while at the same time acknowledging differences among Aboriginal peoples and the significance of place in the constitution of such differences" (2000, p.325).

Jeremy Geia believes that community people are Laura's key stakeholders and local people, especially families, are actively encouraged to attend. This translates into an audience with a clear Indigenous majority, something which few festivals can boast. 'Whitefellas' do attend and camp on the site, but they have to travel to Cairns and drive up by four-wheel drive. Another small contingent is formed by tourists travelling around North Queensland who see the Laura festival as an important destination.

The festival offers concessions for most young people under sixteen who live in Cape York or the Torres Strait and tries to keep prices low. And although there is no doubt that the traditional song and dance presented at the centre of the festival site is the main event, a fringe stage presents contemporary Indigenous bands in the evening. According to Geia, this may be one of the reasons that youth participation is growing: "For some kids it's probably the best thing they're going to do in their lives. Life in remote communities is not a picnic for people (personal communication, 10 February, 2010)." Laura as meeting ground and annual 'thermometer' of the condition of traditional song and dance invites sad reflections by Geia and others that there are fewer and fewer songmen that know the breadth of repertoire, but also becomes a place of hope: a group of teenagers from a place that had lost this part of its culture performed to great acclaim in 2009 after learning from an elder of a related language group, inspired by Laura.

Core to the festival, however, remains its strong link to tradition and place. As Geia explains: It's surrounded by some of the greatest rock art in the world … so when you go there you immediately feel that this place is special and it just heightens the experience of dancing.

> [It's] impossible to pick up and move, you can't replicate that; that country, that place; it's a bora ground so there's certain ceremonies that have been held there for time immemorial. You can't replace that … You can do another festival but you can't call it the Laura Festival … it's like the smell of the place, the feel, the sounds, it's really difficult … it reminds you of your childhood … it takes you back to those good times. (Personal communication, February 10, 2010)

Stylin' UP

The primary focus of Stylin'UP is hiphop as a tool for engaging with young people but, as is the case with Laura and The Dreaming, there is also room for acknowledging and celebrating traditional Indigenous performance from across Queensland. The initial notion of some of the local elders to make country music the focus of the festival (a genre rich in texts on and associations with place in itself!) was seen as not suitable for this place and the goals of the event.

For Athol Young, a Brisbane City Council officer who was instrumental in initiating Stylin'UP, place is significant to the festival primarily in terms of it being an area where many Aboriginal people now live (personal communication, 23 September, 2009). Bartleet et al found that place is certainly significant for that reason (2009, p.149), and that the festival plays a key role in giving a sense of pride of place to a suburb not generally seen as a desirable place to live. At the same time, according to some, the cultural diversity of the suburb and its schools jarred with the specifically Indigenous focus of Stylin' UP, causing a large Pacific Islander population to feel disenfranchised (p. 117). Strengthening a sense of place for one group caused it to feel more unwelcoming to another. Most, however, applaud the initiative.

The festival is held at an outer suburban sporting field with the support of the local community and Council, but it draws Indigenous participants and audiences from all over Queensland. Young argues that the actual site of the festival, a suburban park, is less significant than is the fact that the event is held in the otherwise disadvantaged suburb of Inala, which he believes contributes to community pride:

> It doesn't happen in Roma Street parklands or the Riverstage. Anybody can appear at the Riverstage. Anybody can appear at Roma Street or Queens Street mall or QPAC concert hall. Not everybody gets to have a gig in Inala. Not everybody gets to have a gig in an Indigenous activity called Stylin'UP in Inala. And it's significant, and it's shown its significance because it's actually based in that community and attracts around 20,000 people to that community for a show off day. (Personal communication, September 23, 2009)

Brisbane City Council has been a consistent driver and supporter of the event, but all decisions are emphatically in the hands of Indigenous people. Similarly, Laura takes place on land that is jointly managed by local traditional owner groups. Without the support of these groups and the Management Committee, Laura would not happen in its current location. However The Dreaming, which was more artificially 'superimposed' on the Woodford site, has had to address difficult historical, Native Title and contemporary cultural issues, and continues to work hard to nurture local and broader Indigenous networks in addition to growing a new festival.

The Dreaming

The Dreaming uses the same volunteer model as Woodford and encourages schools and community groups to become involved in festival performances. According to Rhoda Roberts, former Artistic Director of The Dreaming, this approach increases Indigenous attendance which, in turn, may encourage more Indigenous people to attend. The festival organisers also continue to build relationships with local Indigenous people, but as Roberts explains, "The core business is putting on a festival that showcases professionally acclaimed companies of Australia's First Nations … we try to do as much as we can; we cannot be all things to all people" (personal communication, 7 April, 2009).

For a group of young Indigenous women from Southside Education, a Brisbane secondary school, being invited to participate in The Dreaming opening ceremony was a profoundly significant event (Focus Group, 19 February, 2010). While they see Stylin'UP as an opportunity for young people to perform and get together with family, The Dreaming provides an opportunity to engage with many indigenous cultures, and this appears to bring with it a respect for the land itself, as confirmed by the young woman who explained that "at Woodford, you have to have a lot of respect for the land … They treat [Woodford] like sacred land" (Focus Group F). National Aboriginal and Islander Day (NAIDOC) events at Musgrave Park were seen as having more of a social, family context but they also acknowledged a strong attachment to place. Musgrave Park is seen as a safe place for them and according to one young woman, "everyone feels free and feels like they are at home because it's our land and our park" (personal communication, 19 February, 2010). This is reflective of the same philosophy on which Laura is founded.

While the festival has been growing since it started in the winter of 2005, its location and association with Woodford continues to attract an essentially Woodfordian audience to the event, which creates an atmosphere akin to its Summer Festival, and perhaps less of a sense of celebration of a meeting place for Indigenous people.

Access to community festivals

While free events like NAIDOC and Stylin'UP attract large Indigenous audiences from the immediate area and across Queensland, this is not necessarily the case for Laura and The Dreaming, which are more commercial enterprises. Cost was an issue noted in a focus group with young Indigenous women who said that, by contrast, NAIDOC celebrations were one type of event where they always go because "we don't pay for it, just the transport to get there [because] … not all Indigenous people are rich and have the money for these kinds of events, especially when you've got little children" (personal communication, 19 February, 2010).

Focus groups endorsed volunteer programs as an effective way to minimise the cost of attending the Woodford and The Dreaming festivals, especially for students and to a lesser extent, families. At most focus groups, participants who had attended festivals believed them to be child-friendly environments: safe, with space to run around, and with a variety of entertaining activities. For some participants without children, going to an event where there is a wide age range was considered more relaxing than city festivals where there is "a lot of pressure to be cool and look gendery all the time" (personal communication, 28 December, 2009).

All the festivals within this cluster attempt to create an accessible and comfortable experience for their patrons. According to Bill Hauritz it is important for Woodford festival-goers that, "It's easy to get a car park, it's easy to get to the camping area, there's plenty of space, there's lots of good coffee, there's no queues for the toilets or showers; it's quite middle class" (personal communication, April 21, 2009). These facilities are also evident at The Dreaming which provides camp fires throughout the site where people can sit and talk and warm themselves.

Because Stylin'UP is held on a large open sports ground, additional service facilities are brought in especially for the event. As for all festivals in this cluster, organisers ensure that a special place is reserved for the Indigenous Elders. Until recently facilities at Laura were extremely basic, but elders are well-looked after at this festival. According to Jeremy Geia, some Laura audience members found recent festivals 'too flash'. Finding a balance between providing an 'authentic' experience and comfortable facilities is difficult. Moreover, all outdoor festivals need to contend with the weather which can dramatically affect comfort and attendance.

Despite their respective challenges, these festivals share to some extent what Rhoda Roberts describes as an Indigenous perspective of the spirituality of "being on country; even if you're on someone else's country you're still going to acknowledge and feel a connection to some extent." Multi-day festivals such as Woodford, The Dreaming and Laura appear to create a unique experience for people — audience and performers — living closely together in a shared environment. The primary programming focus might be on song and dance, but Geia explains that Laura is "also a great cultural exchange" between and within Indigenous and non-indigenous groups. For Indigenous groups in particular, festivals provide an opportunity to get together to celebrate. In this way, all festivals within this cluster — each in their own way — actively create or build on a meaningful relationship that incorporates place, performers and audiences.

Cluster 7: Emerging and experimental festivals

Straight Out Of Brisbane 2high, and On Edge Festivals

While most of the clusters in this study mainly consist of funded organisations, the picture is incomplete without a glimpse into emerging and experimental festivals. The multi-arts festivals in this cluster demonstrate a shared commitment to independent and emerging artists and artforms. Both Straight Out Of Brisbane and On Edge are artist-run events. The 2high Festival provides a broad platform for both experimental and traditional performing arts and visual arts. The 2high festival is run by emerging cultural producers with support from industry mentors and Backbone Youth Arts. Established in the early 1990s, 2high is the longest running of the three festivals in this cluster. Since its inception it has been located in suburban Brisbane, in and around QPAC and, most recently, at the Brisbane Powerhouse. Straight Out Of Brisbane delivered four festivals in and around Fortitude Valley on the edge of Brisbane's CBD between 2002 and 2006, when it ceased operation. On Edge, a festival that uses various venues and public spaces in Cairns, began in 2004.

On Edge and the 2high Festival receive varying levels of financial support through the Australia Council for the Arts, Arts Queensland and/or Brisbane City Council. Straight Out Of Brisbane received support through Arts Queensland with additional support in 2006 from the Australia Council. This section examines Straight Out Of Brisbane in some depth, including the issues which emerged from its 2006 incarnation and subsequent demise. The other festivals, On Edge and 2high, are considered in the broader context of issues confronting emerging and experimental festivals, their creators and audiences.

Straight Out Of Brisbane (SOOB)

Susan Kukucka, a former SOOB director, describes it as "a festival of independent and emerging arts, culture and ideas … it was literally a program of anything and everything that fit under that banner … we had theatre, writing, visual art, an ideas program, new media, game design" (personal communication, 25 September, 2009). According to Kukucka, the festival's main aim was "to showcase work that was new, ideas that were new, especially at this time which was 2002, '03, '04 there were a lot of interesting new media projects happening and a lot of new technologies."

The impetus for setting up the festival arose from the frustration felt by the festival organisers and other emerging artists. Kukucka argues that "a lot of these artforms and artists and groups weren't really getting represented in mainstream programming in major art centres." Straight Out Of Brisbane refers both to the home town of these artists and the belief that there were limited venues and opportunities to keep them in Brisbane. When SOOB emerged in 2002, Facebook and social networking weren't yet sufficiently available to provide an online space for these artists and artforms. By 2003, "'Just do it' was the catch-cry of the Straight Out Of Brisbane artists whose work reverberated among locals and visitors" (Hankwitz, 2004, p.1).

Inspired by Newcastle's This Is Not Art festival, SOOB was established as an artist-run festival that aimed to provide a space for artists to present their work to the broader public. There was also a strong skills development focus to the festival which was designed to facilitate networking, knowledge sharing and creating new opportunities for emerging artists. Kukucka suggests that the festival was "a space, a place for this art to happen, a time for it to be concentrated and just take shape and go a little bit nuts" (personal communication, 25 September, 2009). She acknowledges that she and the other SOOB organisers, including Ben Eltham, also had a political agenda.

Although they received some financial support towards running the festival, they continued to lobby all levels of government to support emerging artforms through the grants process, and provide more venue spaces for these particular artforms.

SOOB implemented an organisational structure that allowed artists to develop the programming while a management committee facilitated other aspects such as assistance with finding venues. Fortitude Valley became the heart of the festival and the fact that the urban renewal program took place during the time SOOB was up and running meant that the organisers were able to use 'found' spaces that were not tenanted at the time. Spaces such as empty shop fronts and walkways between buildings were transformed into temporary performance and exhibition spaces. Kukucka describes the organisers wanting "to put the works where people might stumble upon them unexpectedly or where it would actually intrude into someone's daily passage through the Valley or through that area" (personal communication, 25 September, 2009).

Straight Out Of Brisbane street art. Photo by Kath Quigley.

Despite the availability of untenanted buildings at the outset, the SOOB organisers still found it difficult, time-consuming and costly to lease space for up to ten days while the festival was running. And as the Valley began to gentrify, 'found' spaces became increasingly unaffordable. Focus group participants, especially those who were involved in the arts, thought it was important to support innovative work in alternative venues and believed they were usually excellent value for money. Such venues were seen as ideal for creative works in development and, according to one young man, "When you are in a place that's not finished, what you're seeing doesn't have to be finished" (personal communication, February 8, 2010).

'Found' venues for one-off events may not always have been easy for audiences to find, and this difficulty deterred some people from attending the full program. As Kukucka explains:

> I think it was a bit difficult for people to kind of catch the train to Brunswick Street and then walk five blocks to find this old office building down an alley. It's not an easy thing for people to overcome, especially if they're new to the concept and what we're doing. I think people came for the program, I think people came for the content and the performers. And I'd like to think they would've come to that wherever it was but maybe not. (personal communication, 25 September, 2009)

Individual venues changed from year to year but SOOB revolved around a central festival club, which according to Kukucka "became a hub for where things took place close and then whatever else we could find in the vicinity". Having a liquor license at the festival club allowed SOOB to raise revenue to supplement ticket sales. SOOB did find support from established venues close to the Valley such as the Institute of Modern Art, the Brisbane Powerhouse and Metro Arts, but any profit from liquor sales went back to the venue. These venues were all Arts Queensland or Brisbane City Council owned venues and the Council also provided a space for the festival office, which was also used throughout the festival for workshops.

Although it remained unrealised, Kukucka suggests that acquiring a dedicated space that was run by artists between festivals was one of SOOB's aspirations. In the same interview, she explained that

> having a sense of ownership over something … can't be under-estimated and I know that after the festival there was a period there when we explored having SOOB as a permanent venue that was a multi-arts venue where artists could come in and lots of different things were happening, that was run and owned and just belonged to the artists. So I think there is that connection that you have to a physical space that is important. (ibid)

SOOB developed relationships with existing venues, but preferred to be associated with certain venues and spaces that, according to Kukucka,

> would be ones that shared a similar vision or a similar ethos or whatever to what the festival had. I don't know how well it would've worked to have brought that festival to QPAC which is regarded as a fairly traditional (what we will call conventional), fairly conservative space, whether it actually is all the time in its programming or not, that's how it's perceived by the public. So I do think … sometimes there is a more natural fit than others and when that fit is a good one you can tap into the audience that exists in that venue as well as your own audience that's following you for programming or for the organisation. I guess that's when it works best. (ibid)

Despite the importance of support from government-funded venues, in interview Kukucka recalled an event which involved a partnership with Fortitude Valley businesses as attracting SOOB's largest audience:

> I think it was 2003, or 2004 — it was called the Ann Street Party … a smaller group of QUT theatre students who came to us and wanted to organise this as part of the festival, and we agreed to it and they managed to convince almost every fashion and design store down that Ann Street strip to allow performers in the windows on a Friday or a Saturday night.
>
> So every window had a different performer, different artist and I just remember going to see it and I thought, "Oh there'll be maybe a few dozen people just peeking in the windows", and I turned the corner and it was that Friday night Valley crowd and it was just hundreds of people all up and down the sidewalk.

> Just fascinated, almost reverting back to childhood and seeing these people that they couldn't talk to performing for them in the window. And it was just amazing and it was really powerful and it really jolted people out of the norm and [was] exciting and fun and that's what the festival's about. (ibid)

Straight Out Of Brisbane: Anne's Street Party. Photo by Kath Quigley.

One of the reasons SOOB was concentrated close to the Valley, according to Kukucka in interview, was "because it was an artist-led festival [so] it happened where the artists were, and a lot of them were in that area or in the inner city which is why things took place there and allowed us to … tap into the support of other arts organisations which were also around". Not only did the audience/artists live near the Valley but public transport made it accessible to a much wider audience from other parts of Brisbane. Kukucka suggests that she "just don't know how it would've worked in a suburban context; I don't think it would've".

Although the Brisbane Powerhouse is located just outside the Valley entertainment precinct and public transport hub, Fraser regards it as highly "compatible with the aesthetic" of the festival. This was also seen to be important by the SOOB organisers. Kukucka argues that although it was a great location for SOOB events, the venue also benefited from an influx of new audiences and new creative work. She also believes that

> it's important for the spaces as well. It enlivens their programming; it puts them in touch with what is happening at a grass roots level which is something that you don't have when you're someone who works in a massive cultural organisation now. You can lose touch with that very quickly. (personal communication, 25 September, 2009)

SOOB attracted an audience which was primarily young, many of them also artists involved in the festival, although Kukucka suggests some components of the program such as the ideas program attracted a broader demographic. For example, she recalls, "the theatre program ... getting a slightly older audience at times but it was aimed at people up to 35 or 40". With these markets in mind, tickets were intentionally priced to ensure that people on low incomes, including artists and younger people, could afford them.

The 2003 Festival received good reviews, like this excerpt from Molly Hankwitz in RealTime:

> To paraphrase one of the panels on urban representations, SOOB "invaded" the space of inner Brisbane with dozens of public projects, defying legal and cultural dictums on what art space is and the definitions of legitimacy and cleanliness that make Brisbane's public and street life non-existent. Walls, alleyways, empty grass lots and even tabletops were all used as spaces for art as SOOB took culture out of the institutions. ... For a few days, the Valley business district was genuinely transformed and Brisbane's independent arts culture rendered visible as artists partied all night and languished daily in the streets. While sometimes caught in a cultural cringe and driven underground by the crusty old guard, this culture is alive and mutating ... and that's true SOOBin'. (2004,p.3)

SOOB illustrates that it is early times to go beyond accessing content through the web and fairly basic creative interaction; while the web is a place of growing importance, the project did not encounter viable online festival experiences as such. While SOOB promoted new media to a (mainly) younger audience, the festival organisers sought access to non-virtual venues and used the internet mainly as a marketing and communications tool for the festival, contacting interstate artists and sending e-flyers, newsletters and blogs, rather than for live streaming of content. Kukucka describes this relatively inexpensive technology as "incredibly important" to the success that SOOB achieved in such a short time, although the difficulties that emerging artists and artforms face in finding and sustaining mutually beneficial creative relationships with venues and audiences should also be noted.

On Edge

Like SOOB, On Edge evolved out of emerging artists' discontent with a lack of support for their artforms (including new media) which made it difficult to reach an audience. Using 'found' spaces allowed SOOB to operate without the restrictions of existing arts venues but these spaces proved to be difficult and time-consuming to access, expensive to lease, and required equipment hire. With their limited resources, the festival faced the dilemma of deciding whether to pay "artists who don't get paid that much or ... spending [their limited resources] on infrastructure" according to Kukucka.

On Edge has overcome barriers to conventional venues by using 'found spaces' such as public laneways and warehouses as well as galleries and existing venues. It too has experienced similar difficulties in accessing these spaces which have varied from year to year depending on local government support, partnership opportunities and cost. Despite these challenges, feedback from focus groups suggest that some audiences do appreciate the use of alternative spaces but issues also arose, for audiences and organisations, about whether people were willing to seek out relatively unknown venues. And while galleries and other non-conventional performing arts venues might offer facilities and opportunities to create and present experimental work, their availability occasionally dictates festival dates creating further obstacles for organisers and audiences.

For On Edge, the Tanks Arts Centre represents an "ideal venue for this style of festival, with a unique post-industrial aspect and history, and multiple indoor and outdoor presentation spaces" according to Nick Mills, the festival director. But Council policies have not always made this possible. He argues that "due to management and program direction changes, experimental and contemporary work is not supported and presented" (personal communication, October 21, 2009).

On Edge: Live in Public Spaces. Photo by Karen Trist, 2009.

2high Festival

While the festivals in this cluster share a commitment to supporting artists (of various ages) at the early stages of their career, the 2high festival is arguably more focused on developing a relationship with a particular venue and its staff who will provide mentoring to the organisers and artists. For SOOB this was not a primary motivation, but creating good relationships was important in providing "an access point for artists," according to Kukucka. Although SOOB and On Edge have offered some free events to encourage attendance, 2high has a greater capacity to do so because of the high levels of subsidy it receives and access it has enjoyed to high profile venues in recent years. These factors have undoubtedly contributed to 2high's viability and enhanced its ability to attract audiences.

Despite beginning as a suburban festival, 2high has largely been run out of QPAC and, more recently, the Brisbane Powerhouse, both venues that offer artists and coordinators the opportunity to work with established industry professionals. This shift reflects the emphasis of this Brisbane City Council program on providing professional development opportunities to young people rather than attempting to encourage suburban arts activity. Former Artistic director of Backbone Youth Arts Fraser Corfield suggests that it was also a pragmatic decision to make the event more easily accessible by public transport.

One characteristic of an 'ideal' venue that the Brisbane Powerhouse provides is the capacity to attract a spill-over audience, according to Brooke Newall, a former 2high festival coordinator. She describes the 2008 festival:

> We had a Brisbane band called The Panics playing in the Brisbane Powerhouse on the Friday night and they are exactly the kind of audience that 2high has, so for people coming to The Panics, a few of them had actually heard about 2high and made a complete night out of it — were coming to see The Panics and were also going to come and watch 2high bands. (personal communication, 1 December 2008)

The identity and the atmosphere of the building are things that the 2high organisers suggest are attractive to their audiences and this perception was confirmed in the focus groups. Young people from regional Queensland who attended a previous 2high festival described the Brisbane Powerhouse atmosphere as "alive and buzzing" (personal communication, 3 February, 2010). While some people did explore exhibitions and listen to free events while they were there, it was unclear whether they might pay to see an event because it coincided with their visit.

Others from various groups raised the use of each space within the venue and commented on the sensory stimulation of being in a recycled space, which they also mentioned in relation to other spaces like the Tanks Arts Centre and the Blackall Woolscour.

Nick Mills believes that the relationship between venues and audiences can be complex: "Venues do create a sense of expectation for the audience, due to the history, culture and programming of those venues" (personal communication, October 21, 2009). He also suggests that this can have a negative affect on potential audiences who might need to be slowly introduced to unfamiliar venues. He relates the strategy that On Edge used in 2009: "Through engaging audiences in one venue, we then were able to 'win them over' to attending another venue that they might not normally have attended". In Mill's opinion, audiences have responded positively to the use of "very non-traditional and/or unique spaces and when we transform traditional spaces through programming or re-formatting spaces for presentation" (personal communication, October 21, 2009).

Each of the festivals in this cluster has also presented work in outdoor spaces such as laneways or public space to extend the physical and/or creative boundaries of their programming. Feedback from a focus group with young people in Blackall suggested that holding events for the Shockwave Festival outside the hall next to the local skate park, as well as inside, created an environment that was experienced as familiar and welcoming. Online presentation is not a significant part of any of the festivals' programming but On Edge and 2high make extensive use of MySpace, Facebook and eNews bulletins via e-mailing lists, to market the festival and engage with their audience about news and upcoming events. As technology and audience habits evolve, the online presence may include more than marketing. Acknowledging this trend, On Edge anticipates presenting more online events in 2011, a development that will be supported by the web becoming a more welcoming place for curating creative experiences year-by-year, as well as by physical spaces such as the State Library of Queensland's The Edge, dedicated to developing and presenting young people's art from its Brisbane South Bank headquarters.

SECTION 3 Bringing together the strands

> A largely middle-aged audience of 600 gathers in the Conservatorium Theatre, located at the heart of Brisbane's cultural precinct, to hear a piano recital in the Medici series. There are few surprises here, from parking before the concert to drinks in the South Bank Parklands after. In between, there is familiar access to the venue, well-organised ticketing, printed programs, comfortable seats, availability of bathrooms, excellent acoustics, a quality instrument, and a highly accomplished musician playing well established repertoire, largely from the common practice period. In fact, most factors are carefully controlled to facilitate full concentration on the core of the experience: the nuances in the interpretation of these works by the pianist. A few thousand kilometres North, in a strongly contrasting setting, the mining community of Mount Isa gathers in their industrial environment to see bobcats dancing as part of the Queensland Music Festival. One of the least likely 'places for art' comes to life in a way that few would expect, but makes perfectly good sense for the location and its ethos, engaging a mixed audience of cutting-edge art lovers and the local community.

These settings exemplify bookends of the interaction between place and performance; from a traditional, carefully planned format to a highly experimental, more spontaneous use of place. The research team for *Redefining Places for Art* has encountered myriad ways in which place and performance can interact on its two-year exploration of a relationship that had been noted often, but never investigated in any great depth. By juxtaposing the motivations of artists and organisations to choose particular places for specific (types of) performances with comments from audiences across the state of Queensland about how they relate to performances in various places, it found a wealth of ideas, contexts and performance practices. In this section, the key findings are summarised in three sections: Themes and trends; Dynamics between place and performance; and Conclusions and recommendations.

Themes and trends

From the interviews and focus group discussions that constituted the core of the research for *Redefining Places for Art*, a number of persistent trends and themes emerged. These can be summarised under the headings of Attraction and access; Edifice and engagement; Performance and place-making; Consumption and curation; and Physical and virtual spaces. The comments regarding each of these themes confirmed that Queensland audiences, no matter what their level of experience with the arts, are highly discerning in their opinions about what they like about divergent places and why. Strikingly, their views largely aligned with both the vision and the constraints under which artists and organisations create and present their work in Queensland, but less with the policies and funding structures that support the performing arts.

Attraction and access

In order to be considered meaningful, a place must develop a relationship with people. Access has emerged as a key issue in this study. Firstly, the term applies to the ability of audience members to become aware of a venue, locate it and get there physically in a comfortable way. This factor constitutes a challenge not only to artists who perform in changing, non-conventional places, but also to iconic places for art with parking challenges. Secondly, access is determined by the ticket price. While there undoubtedly is a ceiling for the ratio between actual dollar value and what audiences think an experience is worth, the research has not found this to be a major factor. In fact, a number of cheap events struggled with finding an audience, while some highly-priced ones sold very well.

But the findings of *Redefining Places for Art* seem to imply that access may be impeded by social mindsets, by perceptions that people have of particular artistic practices or specific places. Stories of perceived intimidation about performance etiquette in the traditional artforms highlight the existence of barriers that need to be cleared before greater audience engagement might be possible. There are implications in this for education on a number of levels: inferences that the classroom might be the first point of access for widening audiences; suggestions for professional education which is more open to flexible engagement with audiences; and potentials for educating audiences of different ages using various means.

Participants in this research acknowledge that access is not only a matter for the audience, but for performers too. Performance companies face logistical barriers which challenge their access in some places. For ballet, it may be the lack of a suitable floor, or interrupted sight lines between the performers and audience. This is an artform that does not necessarily seek the element of proximity because it confines what the dancers are able to communicate. Often, additional expense is a barrier to resolving logistics.

It is widely felt that currently there are not enough places (edifices) for performance in Queensland, nor enough diversity among the places used to present the performing arts. Because the choice is limited, sometimes the synergy between artform and venue is not developed to its full potential. For the companies, access, even to their 'home' venue, may be limited by heavily-booked seasons. Cost may also be a barrier which prevents their access to a particular place in which they wish to perform. If they are uncertain of their likely audience, the capacity of a venue — no matter how suited to the artform or the work — may preclude their access on financial grounds. A domino effect can kick in when the company's decision about ticket prices in turn reduces access for the audience.

Edifice and engagement

Artists, administrators and audiences alike acknowledge that performance has the potential to transform a place, to give meaning to it which might be perceived either positively or negatively. Buildings, their size, design and atmosphere, play a major role in this.

First of all, the findings from this research demonstrate that audiences are keenly sensitive to differences in scale. This plays out firstly across the continuum of spaces that are proscenium-based, but which differ in their capacity to meet the needs of both performers and audience. In Cairns, the Civic Theatre is a large space, but when compared to the Lyric Theatre in Brisbane, it is considered an intimate one. In this study, 'intimacy' in the minds of both audience and artists was related to the physical or perceived proximity between them, and the consequent potential for engaging through that closeness. It is based on the idea that art happens in the indefinable 'space' between the audience and artist against the significant backdrop of any place which might serve as a stage.

The building date of proscenium theatres and other spaces does not seem to be decisive. Being new (in age) does not necessarily ensure new creative work will be performed there, nor does it insure a venue from losing its appeal to the audience over time. New venues can easily become tired venues, just as older ones can remain vital. Among audience participants in this study, it was obvious that the excitement is seen to come from within the edifice, not primarily from the edifice itself.

However, despite its relative importance, simply being in a place is not enough: performance does not automatically realise any potential a particular place might offer. Is the secret in that ephemeral moment of cockatoos rising off the lake at Karnak Playhouse, just as the sun is setting, or the kangaroos bounding off through the dawn at Winton?

In these examples, elements of the place add magic in a way that cannot be planned. But this study has found that there is more to the transformation than fortuitous moments of enchantment: place transforms art when explicit connections are made between the two, between the performance and audience in that place. Such was the case when a musical fence in Winton transformed the attitudes of hardened locals, when bobcats danced in Mt Isa to a town which took ownership of this extraordinary art, and when The Road We're On created enduring resonances among young and old in the Charleville community.

This drives home the idea that transformation is not automatic. This study has encountered numerous examples of performance positioned in non-conventional places that failed to connect with the local culture, or the audience expectation, or both. More often, whilst a particular place might be an attraction in itself, it will not necessarily be transformed artistically through tourism alone, by "touring in yet another meaningless show" (Terracini, personal communication August 13, 2009). Beyond this approach, examples from the Queensland Music Festival demonstrate that embedding a performance in the local interests, in the local culture, having it emerge from local stories, linking it to local people has a more transformative effect on place, on the art, and on the community. In such examples, the whole town might be the performance stage. Involved with its planning and production, local people find it difficult to escape the inevitability of and anticipation about the performance which has taken shape before their eyes, in their midst, and in their minds during months of preparation. Such was the enduring effect of QMF events Bobcats Dancing at Mt Isa in 2001, and The Road We're On at Charleville in 2009. Whilst this research has confirmed such transformations are possible, it has also noted that they are not essential for performance to satisfy an audience.

Performance and place-making

It follows from the above that it is of great importance to set the scene for a favourable audience experience. Audience members have expectations relative to the place in which performance is set. To the participants in this study, iconic venues like the Queensland Performing Arts Centre suggest status and set the scene for a special night out. The same is obvious for regional participants who view their local proscenium stage, whether it is the Empire Theatre in Toowoomba or the Civic Theatre in Townsville, as a place which implies quality, in both the performances presented there and in the service available.

Redefining Places for Art found that quality of service at a venue is a strikingly significant factor for audiences. The facilities available at any place for performance are often to a large degree 'filters' through which the audience experiences the performance. Poor parking or a long queue at the bar has the potential to set the scene for, and colour the response to, what might happen in the performance space; expectations accompany the audience into the space. Whether about the artform or any etiquette related to it, whether aligned with confidence or insecurity, contentment or discomfort, how an audience member feels during the performance may affect not only their engagement with that performance, but also their likeliness to respond favourably to another of the same kind. There is the suggestion that, whilst some participants welcome the expectation of dressing up and making a special effort for a performance perceived to be associated with status or just a good night out, there are those deterred by negative perceptions of what an event might entail.

Among participants in this study there was an obvious desire to experience the unexpected, and a positive response to dramatic effects which had been specifically manipulated by the producers. This study uncovered clear attempts by performance companies to use place as a vehicle for bringing the audience into the action. There was an appreciation of and positive response to Opera Queensland's choice of the Conservatorium Theatre in Brisbane for a more confronting effect through perceived proximity to the action in Fidelio. Likewise, audiences in Cairns appreciated the dramatic effect of The Kirsk presented in CoCA, just as the Toowoomba audience did for the same work set in the smaller performance space at Oakey.

For the participants in this study, being in the frame of the action is something they welcome when it enhances their experience of the performance. Their comments suggest that there are times when the comfort of the seating is less significant in the face of dramatic effect.

Extending the performance through complementary experiences is something that helps to create an imprint on one's life experience. This research confirms that audiences align the element of socialising with attendance at performing arts events. They want to create a shared memory of the performance through socialising before and after the performance. Having foyer facilities that encourage socialising, eating, drinking and meeting friends, is valued by audiences. If there is an emergent trend, it is in the hunger for events which allow a relaxed form of engagement, maybe even with a drink in hand. All focus groups reported that socialising was an expectation of their attendance at events, suggesting that by developing an emotional connection to the experience, socialising will likely enhance the sense of connection to place.

In all of these themes is an underlying premise that soft infrastructure is more significant than hard — that the constellation of elements which relate to how the audience approaches, receives and responds to a performance is not only influenced by the infrastructure, the place of performance, but in turn has a significant impact upon the performance itself.

Among the examples in this study, there is clear evidence that performances have the potential to be catalysts for change in the relationships between art and place. This is particularly so for festivals that offer the unexpected, and create wider access than most main stage performances are able to achieve. The Queensland Music Festival in particular has shown over a number of years that performance which engages an audience by building a relationship with the place or culture in which the people exist has an enduring impact on them. Festivals have the capacity to demonstrate the extent of what is possible. By creating an event in an unexpected setting, or creating a setting for a performance event, a festival can open the imagination for further development of that site. Consider the expectations of the people of Winton who believed that their Musical Fence would be the most likely place for subsequent festival events in their town; and the ongoing use of Cooktown's Musical Ship as a stage for performance events since its creation in 2007.

Consumption and curation

Many of the practices and views encountered by *Redefining Places for Art* points towards an important change of approach in, or at least of awareness of, the very nature of experiencing live performance. There seems to be a decisive shift from the idea of 'art for art's sake' (increasingly perceived as a 19th Century European fiction) to 'art for the sake of the experience', which can range from the carefully controlled piano recital to expecting the unexpected in outdoor settings; from the 'musical museum' (itself an invented tradition allowing communities to link to the great art of the past) to cutting edge combinations of live and virtual art in remote communities.

Few of those presenting heritage art in conventional venues advocate that they present a product on stage merely there for the audience to admire from afar. They show considerable awareness of audiences carefully choosing where they go and how they want to engage with the performance. By their very nature, festivals invite visitors to curate their own experience: sit down for an entire segment, move about between performances, listen to music from a distance while having a coffee, or participate directly in the event. Many place- or site-specific works also actively engage the community, giving it a voice or active role in the experience. Online formats go even further, allowing surfers to decide on factors like time, length, content, and level of engagement with the performance.

Physical and virtual spaces

The development of technology both challenges and inspires artists and administrators. It is undeniable that visuals matter across the performing arts. Just as audiences are excited by special effects generated by new media, so are artists inspired by them. The challenge for companies, if not financial, is almost always logistical. There are as many times when the organisation wants something that the venue can't provide as there are times when the venue has the capacity to do much more than the company requires or understands. In this study it was not unusual to have organisations proudly claim to be using new media, when the reality is that they use projection and lighting effects. The art itself occurs without technology, but is enhanced by it.

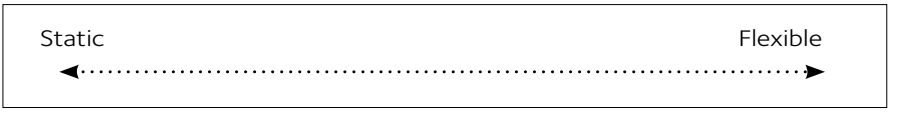
Whilst a number of examples in this research included new media and technology, and one work, *Dirty Apple*, used a traditional artform (opera) based on a story about and including technology, the study discovered only one striking example of performing artists extending the boundaries by building performance around the potentials offered by new media and technology: *iOrpheus*, the 'iPod opera' that combined downloaded scenes with live music and a concluding performance by the largely online 'Cathedral band'. Nonetheless, even though few examples of in-depth use of new technology as integral part of the performance were discovered, the pace of change suggests that there will almost certainly be much more in the future. Additionally, *iOrpheus* indicates that an in-depth use of virtual space can involve — or perhaps even implies — a rethinking of physical performance spaces.

Dynamics between place and performance

The depictions of the various places for performing arts in this study may at first sight seem to point at a dichotomy between conventional and innovative use of place (from highly static to extremely flexible) as outlined in the vignette opening this section. Such an interpretation is easily illustrated by a number of examples from the case studies.

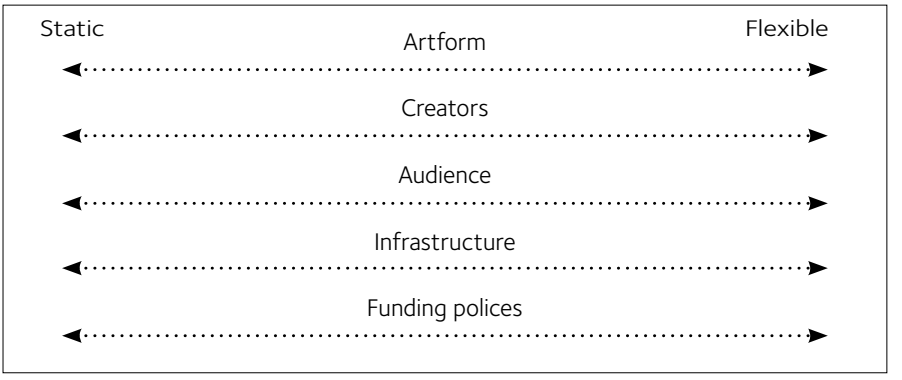
For the vast majority of its creative work, Opera Queensland is committed to bringing full productions of a time-honoured form of highly developed *Gesamtkunstwerken* to Queensland audiences. This limits flexibility: the demands on set, orchestra, chorus, and soloists dictate the use of a fully equipped theatre with a fly-tower, orchestra pit, and excellent acoustics. In contrast, Woodford Folk Festival invited its audiences to a green field site north of Brisbane between Christmas and New Year. Thousands of people make the journey to brave heat and mud and curate their experiences between street theatre, Indigenous arts, emerging folk singers, multicultural acts, and a few star performers, often camping to catch several days of this degustation of the folk and world music scene.

But there are many examples of artists, organisations and artforms that position themselves between static and flexible. QPAC produces a children's festival just outside its concrete walls to increase a sense of access; JUTE Theatre creates flexible productions that can be realised anywhere from bare concrete halls to well-equipped theatres; the Queensland Ballet invites people into their rehearsal studio to create intimate contact with both new and existing audiences. Rather than a dichotomy, this creates a sliding scale from highly static to extremely flexible, onto which all examples and case studies from this research can be positioned relatively easily:



While neat, this continuum reveals little of the mechanisms that drive particular performances to their specific relationship to place. This relationship depends on the interplay of a number of forces, or even fields of tension: the artform may dictate aspects of the interaction with place; the creators/performers have a particular scope of possibilities; the audience makes choice on what it finds important in choosing places; the infrastructure of existing dedicated spaces, newly commissioned spaces and explorable spaces is an important hardware factor; and funding policies can also dictate what is possible and what is not. These can be summarised in a series of five continuums which can contribute to a more meaningful analysis the relationship between performance and art:

TABLE 10: Five continuums driving the relationship between performance and place



There is no fixed formula for the outcomes of such complicated interplay, nor is there a need for a preconceived desired outcome. It is also important to note that there is no inherent value judgment in the degree of flexibility in dealing with place: as this report illustrates, this is driven by a wide range of factors both within and beyond the control of artists, organisations and audiences. These drivers and obstacles often come in pairs: in fact many characteristics can be either driver or obstacle (or even both depending on the artform and circumstances). Many of these factors have come to the fore in this exploration of the relationship between place and performance. They can be summarised as follows:

TABLE 11: Drivers and obstacles to flexibility in relationship with place

Drivers	Obstacles
The creative, exploratory and innovative nature of art and art forms	Physical demands for a performance (acoustics, floors, sight lines etc)
Passionate, creative individuals who think and act 'out of the box'	Risk-averseness, organisational survival, and sustainability
Exploratory artistic and organisational philosophies and management styles	Consolidating artistic and organisational philosophies and management styles
No to low hire costs for many non-conventional spaces	Very high costs to realise demands of production of most artforms
Excitement of exploring new places	The desire for 'a place of one's own'
Exploring cultural identities	Established cultural identities
Recognition of diversity	Focus on a single aspect of excellence
Capacity to think, create, negotiate, and organise the new	Expertise at creating high quality recurring experiences
Engagement with wider community and changing constituencies	Loyal group of followers with fixed set of expectations / preconceptions
Combining experiencing performance with exploring a new place	People being able to find, used to, and comfortable with a place
Flexibility in expectations; audience/ participants looking for new experiences	Workplace health and safety laws, liability, and other restrictive legislation/regulations
Untested creative visions that often attract small discerning audience	Marketing imperatives that demand substantial audience numbers
Preferential funding for innovation	Majority of funding in flagships
Flexible design of space customised for specific performances/events	Inflexible edifices and capital development/ investment models
Continuing flexibility	The new becoming staid over time
New technologies enabling new performance formats	Limited access to high-end new technologies across locations

Conclusions and recommendations

Place-making occurs everywhere: from the bouquet of flowers on the stage at a piano recital to clearing the underbrush for an outback dance performance to logging on to an online poetry reading. Place-making can be conventional or innovative, physical or constructed. In all cases, it is a significant force in drawing audiences and shaping their experience. What *Redefining Places for Art* has found is not so much a radical shift from conventional to alternative places and spaces, but rather a seeking for a new balance between the various formats of presenting performances available at the beginning of the 21st century, from the grand theatres inherited from Europe to highly individual virtual spaces.

While the statistics are inconclusive (as they have not been collected for this purpose), the project has found abundant evidence of new and imaginative use of place across new and older performance traditions. This is evident from the activities of dedicated explorers of new spaces (including festivals which position new work or recontextualise existing performance formats) to the activities of more conventional venues, such as the Empire Theatre and QPAC, who emphatically organise activities 'out of the box'.

New places have the potential to connect to new audiences, but it would be a mistake to reduce this to marketing of 'broadening participation' and reaching larger audiences. In fact, smaller audiences may buy in to a particularly adventurous product, considering this a high-quality experience. This relates to the key concept underlying this project: a sense of the audience not primarily as consumer, but as an active participant in the experience, to the point of acting as a co-creator or curator.

The breadth of exploration of place in the performing arts seems to depend very strongly on the space inside the mind of an individual creator, curator or administrator. Not recognising limits there seems to make the impossible possible, although all ideas are subsequently moderated by constraints in the physical, funding and organisational realm. While the three 'A's' (artists, audiences and administrators) seem to naturally gravitate to a balance between conventional and non-conventional spaces, policy and especially funding structures are less than conducive to nurturing this diversity. This is a key finding of the project.

Some of the further findings of the project are sobering:

- Many artists who create imaginative, site-specific performances do so out of necessity rather than conviction, and wished they had a stable physical base
- Realising performances in non-conventional spaces is often very costly and plagued by regulations, laws and liabilities
- Indigenous concepts of connectedness between performance and place play a limited role in shaping this relationship in mainstream Australian performing arts
- New places are only exciting as such for a limited duration; once the novelty wears off, they risk being seen as staid
- It is easy to underestimate the relationship between the comfort of performing arts audiences and their level of engagement with performance experiences

Realities and perceptions of access seem to play a key role in choosing meaningful places for performance. While parking, weather protection and the availability of food and toilets (as two ends of the same domain) are of obvious importance, attitudes and preconceptions ("this opera opening night is a setting in which I belong and will feel very comfortable") may be as decisive. Both audiences and administrators emphasise the importance of an open, friendly, and accessible atmosphere, conducive to place-making. There is no convincing case for ticket prices to be considered as a key driver for choosing location audiences will pay what they think the experience is worth.

Related to this, manners and levels of engagement and a sense of intimacy with experience are important. This partially depends on the positioning of the spectator-participant vis-à-vis the creator-star. This engagement also raises questions on the continuum from education to community to professionals. Many initiatives that deal creatively with place involve collaborations across a divide that has perhaps become too strong with far-going professionalisation in the performing arts. This in turn is linked to commercial opportunities to connect with communities, the education and tertiary sector; and the rise of the amateur, not in the sense of 'not-good-enough-to-be-professional' but in its original meaning of 'lover-of-the-art.' Finally, there is the role of online experiences, which in themselves — in spite of their potential — do not yet play a very strong role beyond audiences consuming digitally mediated performance, although they are increasingly integrated with performance and will no doubt be more so and more imaginatively so in the future as creative links are forged.

The flexibilities in approach such partnerships imply are closely related to management styles and models of governance. There is a distinct sense that a number of the larger organisations examined in this study are caught in the tension between creative desire and the need to survive. If not dealt with carefully, this tension only increases over time, as the discrepancy grows between the creative spirit of the time and the format the organisation is trapped in. Unfortunately, this situation is often an unintended consequence of the desire for stability within the arts sector.

Policy and funding

In a creative, inspiring and sustainable relationship between place and performance, two factors of crucial importance are arts policies and funding. In Queensland, factors both conducive and restrictive coexist. Since the 1980s, the Queensland state government has shifted the place of arts and cultural policy and funding from the periphery closer to the centre of policy-making, recognising the importance of arts and culture to cultural development, economic revitalisation, identity formation and place-making.
Local government in some regional centres have been proactive in supporting cultural initiatives, and the Arts Queensland Regional Arts Development Fund (RADF) has motivated many local government agencies to invest in the arts on the promise of having their investment matched by the state government. The past decade has seen a burgeoning of animation and initiates alongside revitalised traditional performing arts organisations.
In addition, festivals and community events as well as a range of 'popular' cultural events continue to prosper in terms of numbers of attendees and participants and economic returns.

Even so, the bulk of the arts and cultural budget continues to be directed towards the major infrastructure such as QPAC compared with other infrastructure projects such as Gritty Places (Arts Queensland, 2009c) which transform disused buildings into arts and cultural venues. When first announced as a regional initiative in 2006, Minister Rod Welford confirmed that "Gritty Places will help foster creative industries in communities by transforming disused buildings into spaces suitable for visual artists, musicians, actors and other performers to conduct a range of creative activities" (New Lease of Life … , 2006). Whilst this study confirms that audiences are ready to attend gritty places for performance, it is not clear how well initiatives like Gritty Places and arts hubs align in scope and volume with the potential from creators and the expectations of audiences.

Regardless of the success and vibrancy of regional and local cultural initiatives across the state, Brisbane still has the larger places for performance and all of the principal performing arts 'flagship' organisations. It continues to be the epicentre of cultural activity in Queensland despite the success and vibrancy of regional and local cultural initiatives across the state. Ironically, as the number of venues and cultural organisations elsewhere in the state increases, the number of cultural organisations in Brisbane has stagnated and the number of cultural venues that can act as an alternative to the major venues has in fact decreased. As culture lovers seek other place and spaces to perform their art, the options have narrowed, at least in the state's capital. Moreover, efforts to push culture out of the centre of Brisbane to the suburbs — where people live and spend their leisure time — have mostly faltered mostly, apart from isolated events such as Stylin'UP in Brisbane's Indigenous and ethnic suburb of Inala. Beyond Brisbane, performances such as those commissioned by the Queensland Music Festival give cause for excitement about the potential that exists beyond the major cities for the creation of, and engagement with performance.

Out of this research flow five key recommendations at policy/organisational level.

- As the connection between place and performance is strong in defining the quality of the experience of performing arts audiences in Queensland, a greater awareness of this force in planning, marketing and realising performances is highly desirable. This awareness is needed across highly conventional to highly experimental places, from major performance venues to individual online experiences.
- While a wealth of statistical data is gathered related to the performing arts, very little can be used to understand the influence of place on performance and success. For this to be done effectively, acquittals, annual reports, and surveys (including that of the Australian Bureau of Statistics) should generate dependable data on diverse, flexible and creative use of place, in addition to their current focus on artforms.
- Forward planning is becoming increasingly important, as we see major changes in technology, demography, and new generations growing up with different frames of references and ways of accessing art experiences. In related sectors (e.g. the record industry) we have seen the need for radical change of business models. There is a strong link between flexibility and sustainability, which is not reflected in present funding structures.
- One of the least flexible aspects of the relationship between place and performance is the dedicated performance venue. In terms of quantity, design and anticipated longevity, it is important to consider trends in city developments and map out implications for town planners and architects before making major investments.
- Queensland needs a wider range of places for performance, and more of them. Given the obvious interest in flexible outdoor performances, one model might be the establishment of permanent infrastructure in a favourite outdoor setting, reducing the cost of providing sound, lighting, and performer facilities for performances. Somewhere in the middle of the infrastructure continuum lies the creative hub, that static place from which all manner of non-static performance might become possible for those organisations that do not have a home. With such infrastructure, they may not need one.

Across the state of Queensland — or anywhere in Australia and beyond — there is no fixed formula for the exact nature of and proportion between conventional and non-conventional places for art. However, given the various findings of this study, it stands to reason that a healthy diversity of fixed and flexible places will represent an ecosystem most conducive to vibrant, diverse and sustainable performance practices.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: List of Acronyms

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AFCM	Australian Festival of Chamber Music
AMPAG	Australian Major Performing Arts Group
BIA	Backing Indigenous Arts
CoCA	Centre of Contemporary Arts (Cairns)
CURFs	Confidentialised Unit Record Files (ABS)
GSS	General Social Survey (ABS)
JUTE	Just Us Theatre Ensemble (Cairns)
LPA	Live Performance Australia
NARPACA	Northern Australian Regional Performing Arts Centres Association
NORPA	Northern Rivers Performing Arts
OA	Opera Australia
QBMF	Queensland Biennial Music Festival
QIAMEA	Queensland Indigenous Arts Marketing Export Agency
QMF	Queensland Music Festival
QPAC	Queensland Performing Arts Centre
QSO	Queensland Symphony Orchestra
QTC	Queensland Theatre Company
SEIFA	Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas
SOOB	Straight Out Of Brisbane
S2M	Small-to-Medium

Appendix 2: Queensland Performing Arts Timeline

1849	Queensland School of Arts founded	
1858	Brisbane Philharmonic Society established	
1881	Theatre Royal (Elizabeth St, Brisbane) opens	
1888	Her Majesty's Opera House opens (Queen St, Brisbane)	
1895	Waltzing Matilda by A. B. Patterson first sung in Wi nton	
1902	Nellie Melba performs at the Exhibition Building, Brisbane	
1911	Cremorne Theatre opens (open air)	Burns down in 1954, later re-invented as part of QPAC in 1985
1911	Empire Theatre, Toowoomba, opens	Burns down in 1933; later re-built to be opened in 1997
1912	Palace Gardens opens (open air vaudeville)	
1925	Brisbane Repertory Theatre established	Becomes La Boîte in 1967
1929	Ballerina Pavlova visits	
1937	Ballet Theatre of Queensland formed	
1946	Theatre Royal re-opens after WW2	
1947	Queensland Symphony Orchestra formed	
1948	Brisbane Opera Company formed	
1956	Queensland Conservatorium of Music founded	
1960	(Charles) Lisner Ballet Company established, renamed Queensland Ballet in 1962	First ballet company to tour regional centres throughout Australia
1961	Warana established, Brisbane	Becomes Brisbane Biennial Festival of Music 1996-2008 and Brisbane Festival in 2009
1965	The annual Country Music Muster (near Gympie) started	Runs till 1985
1968	Queensland Ballet re-started with state government grant	Member of the Major Performing Arts Group (AMPAG) since 1999
1969	Queensland Theatre Company formed and SGIO Theatre opened	QTC becomes statutory authority in 1970 and renamed Royal Queensland Theatre Company in 1984; later renamed Queensland Theatre Company; member of the Major Performing Arts Group (AMPAG) since 1999
1978	Queensland Film Corporation formed	
1980	Laura Dance Festival began	
1981	Lyric Opera of Queensland established	Replacing the Queensland Opera Company, later renamed Opera Queensland; member of the Major Performing Arts Group (AMPAG) since 1999
1985	Country Music Muster moves to Amamoor State Forest Park	

1985	QPAC opened in Queensland Cultural Centre opened by Duke & Duchess of Kent; 1500 seat Lyric Theatre + 2000 seat Concert Hall + Cremorne Theatre	
1985	Dance North established; re-named Dancenorth in 2008)	
1987	Rock'n'Roll Circus formed; re-named Circa in 2004	
1987	First Woodford Folk Festival held at Maleny	Moved to Woodford site in 1994
1992	JUTE formed in Cairns	Moves to own home in 2004
1996	Queensland Ballet tours 26 centres in USA	
1997	Empire Theatre re-opened	
1997	Topology formed	
2000	Brisbane Powerhouse opened	
2000	Clocked Out formed	
2001	Queensland Symphony Orchestra and Queensland Philharmonic Orchestra merged as The Queensland Orchestra	Member of AMPAG since 1999
2001	Judith Wright Centre of Contemporary Art opened in Fortitude Valley, Brisbane	
2001	Stylin' Up started at Inala, Brisbane	
2002	Tropic Sun established	
2002	2high event established	Part of Backbone Youth Theatre; runs until 2005
2002	Straight Out Of Brisbane (SOOB) event started	Runs until 2006
2004	On Edge started in and around Cairns	
2005	The Dreaming Festival started; held at Woodford in June	Australia's first international indigenous festival
2006	Deep Blue Orchestra's first performance	Developed from ARC research project and trialled as part of the Brisbane Festival
2009	The Queensland Orchestra reverts back to Queensland Symphony Orchestra	
2010	Queensland Ballet celebrates 50th anniversary	

Appendix 3: Interview Participants

Cluster/Organisation	Name	Position
Major Urban and Regional Arts Venues		
Queensland Performing Arts Centre	John Kotzas	Chief Executive
Empire Theatre	Ann-Marie Ryan	General Manager
Flagship Companies		
Opera Queensland	Chris Mangin	Chief Executive/Artistic Director
Queensland Ballet	François Klaus	Artistic Director/Chief Choreographer
	Judith Anderson	General Manager
Queensland Symphony Orchestra	Richard Wenn	Director — Artistic Planning
Queensland Theatre Company	Libby Anstis	General Manager
Major Festivals		
Queensland Music Festival	Lyndon Terracini	Artistic Director (2001, 2003 & 2005)
	Paul Grabowsky	Artistic Director (2007)
	Deborah Conway	Artistic Director (2009)
	Erica Hart	Program Director
Brisbane Festival	Lyndon Terracini	Artistic Director (2006, 2008 & 2009)
S2M Brisbane-based Organisations		
Circa	Yaron Lifschitz	Artistic Director
	Lewis Jones	Executive Producer (2007-08)
Clocked Out	Vanessa Tomlinson	Co-Director
Topology	Robert Davidson	Principal and composer
Phluxus	Nerida Matthaei	Co-founder and choreographer
Deep Blue	Darren Clark	Producer
S2M Regional Organisations		
JUTE	Suellen Maunder	Artistic Director/CEO
	Sarah Flenley	General Manager (fmr)
Crossroad Arts	Steve Mayer-Miller	Artistic Director
Tropic Sun	Lorna Hempstead	General Manager (fmr)
Full Throttle Theatre Company (formerly Tropic Sun)	Madonna Davies	Co-Artisitic Director
Dancenorth	Joanne Fisher	General Manager
	Michelle Ryan	Artistic Director (fmr)

Cluster/Organisation	Name	Position
Community-focused Festivals		
Woodford Folk Festival	Bill Hauritz	Festival Director
	Amanda Jackes	General Manager
The Dreaming	Rhoda Roberts	Festival Director (2005-2009)
Laura Dance Festival	Jeremy Geia	Artistic Director
	John Farrington	Manager Quinkan Cultural Centre
Stylin'UP	Athol Young	Special Events Manager(fmr), Project Manager, Brisbane City Council
Emerging, Experimental and Online Festivals and Events		
Straight Out Of Brisbane	Susan Kucucka	Co-Director (fmr)
2high Festival	Andrew Cory	Artistic Director, Backbone Youth Arts
	Fraser Corfield	Artistic Director, Backbone Youth Arts (2005-2009)
	Brooke Newall	Co-ordinator (2008)
On Edge	Nicholas Mills	Artistic Director

Other Organisations	Name	Position
Contemporary Urban Venue		
Brisbane Powerhouse	Andrew Ross	Director
Contemporary Regional Venues		
Karnak Playhouse	Diane Cilento	Director
Riverway Arts Centre	Glenn Arboit	Manager (fmr)
Theatre to the Edge		
Queensland Art Council	Jane Atkins	Manager Ontour Onstage (fmr)
Popular Music		
QMusic	Emma Carton	Project Officer
	Dan Lewis	Special Projects Officer
Local Government		
Brisbane City Council	Charlie Cush	Manager Creative Communities, Brisbane City Council
	Ian Hunter	Manager, Community Facilities

Appendix 4: Sample Interview Questions

Semi-structured interviews were selected as the most appropriate method for conducting in-depth interviews with key personnel from performing arts organisations and venues. Additional interviews were conducted with organisations outside the original clusters, such as the Brisbane Powerhouse, Karnak Playhouse and QMusic, to address issues that arose from participant responses and to include additional perspectives that could enrich and extend the research findings.

This interview approach provided a flexible framework which facilitated focused, conversational, two-way communication. Questions were designed to explore the research questions but were tailored to ensure relevance to each organisation. The sample questions provided below were used as a framework and further questions were incorporated during the interview to clarify and discuss emerging issues. Prior to the interview being conducted, all of the subjects were provided with consistent background information regarding the purpose of the research.

Sample Performing Arts Organisation Questions

- Could you describe the artistic focus of your organisation?
- Where do you present your work or present the work of others?
- What were the main factors (internal and external) you considered when making these decisions?
- Could you describe instances of presenting work in non-conventional settings?
- What were your reasons for selecting particular settings to present work?
- What are some of the limitations and advantages of presenting work in conventional vs non-conventional settings?
- What do you think is the nature of the relationship between the work you present and venue?
- Could you describe your audience and the basis for your assumptions?
- Do you think your audience is different or responds differently depending on how or where a work is presented?
- Has your approach to where you present work changed over the past 5-10 years? And how do you think it will change in the future?

Sample Performing Arts Venue Questions

- Could you describe the programming focus of your organisation?
- Could you explain the underlying rationale for programming decisions?
- Where do you think the venue sits in relation to other performing arts venues?
- In what ways is it similar to or different from other venues?
- Could you describe your audiences and the basis for your assumptions?
- What do you think are some of the factors that attract audiences to the venue?
- Do you think flexibility is an important criterion to allow a range of performers to present their work?
- Can you provide examples of how the venue has achieved this flexibility?
- Do you believe that the venue facilitates interaction between performers, and between performers and audiences?
- Can you provide examples of how the venue has facilitated interaction?
- What are some of the barriers to implementing flexibility or interaction?

Appendix 5: Profiles For Focus Group Participants

Location	Participants/Demographics/Interests	Specific Topics
A. Blackall		
A.1 Woolscour 2 March, 2010	7 participants: • younger women, older women and older men • older women involved with Arts Council • some of the men participated in QMF event	• QMF event • Other venues and cultural festivals • travel/other barriers
A.2 Old Memorial Hall 3 March, 2010	5 participants: • three young women and two young men • all in their late teens/twenties • some involved in Shockwave Festival	• QMF event • Other venues and cultural festivals • cost/other barriers
B.Brisbane		
B.1 Brisbane Power-house 30 March, 2010	3 participants: • two women and a man • all in their thirties or forties • attended traditional & contemporary artforms	• QPAC / other venues • Dirty Apple • accessibility incl wheelchair access
B.2 Judith Wright Centre 11 February, 2010	9 participants: • mainly women and three men • one teenager, others middle-aged or older • attended traditional & contemporary artforms • one regularly travels from Toowoomba	• QPAC / other venues • Circa • accessibility incl proximity
B.3 QPAC 1 March, 2010	4 participants: • all women • one younger others middle-aged or older • attended mostly traditional artforms	• QPAC / other venues incl Thomas Dixon • Dirty Apple • accessibility
B.4 QPAC 8 March, 2010	3 participants: • all women • one student, one mid-age, one 60+ • attended mostly traditional artforms	• QPAC / other venues incl Thomas Dixon & Billy Brown • Dirty Apple • accessibility
C. Bundaberg 16 February, 2010	8 participants: • mostly women (6) and some men (3) • two younger, most middle-aged and two older • attended/involved in artforms and events	• local / other venues • outdoor venues • choice & facilities
D. Cairns		
D. 1 Civic Theatre 8 February, 2010	8 participants: • one younger man and two middle-aged men, mostly middle-aged and two older women • attended range of Cairns' venues & events • some involved in artforms and events	• local / other venues • outdoor venues • children • choice & facilities
D.2 Arts Nexus 8 February, 2010	4 participants: • one man and three women in their 30s or 40s • attended range of Cairns' venues & events • all involved in artforms and events	• local / other venues • outdoor venues • children • choice & facilities

Location	Participants/Demographics/Interests	Specific Topics
E.		
E. Cooktown 9 February, 2010	9 participants: • three men (one younger) and six women mostly in their 30s and 40s, but two older • attended QMF and regional events • some involved/participated in events	• local / other events • outdoor venues • children • remoteness
F. Sunnybank (Southside Education)	5 participants: • all young women, late teens to early 20s • all completing secondary education, most Indigenous and some with children • most performed at Stylin'UP & The Dreaming	• Indigenous / other events • Stylin'UP / The Dreaming • children • cost/other barriers
G. Toowoomba Empire Theatre 3 February, 2010	13 participants: • one man and twelve women, across age groups from late teens to post-50s • range of demographics, three staff from administration • two from Brisbane who are regular subscribers to Empire programs	• local / other events • regional issues • range of venue needs • outdoor events
H. Woodford Woodford Folk Festival 2 pilot groups 28 December, 2009	13 participants: • mostly younger women and men with smaller number of middle-aged men and women • most volunteers, some musicians	• Woodford/ other festivals & events • outdoor venues • children • cost/other barriers

Appendix 6:: Sample Focus Group Questions

Focus groups were conducted to collect data that would provide insights into the perspectives and experiences of audiences in relation to the performing arts and venues. The groups explored their attitudes and clarified their reason for making the decisions they do regarding attendance. The focus groups were also useful as a means of cross-validating the attitudes and ideas that had emerged during the individual interviews with performing arts organisation personnel. This qualitative approach also provided an additional method of interpreting the quantitative statistical data analyses.

Given the broad range of performing arts audiences, several groups were needed to examine various aspects of the research questions. For example, groups were conducted in major cities, regional and remote areas with different levels of performing arts availability. To ensure as broad representation as possible in regional areas, two groups were run using distinct segments, if possible. A total of eight focus groups were conducted across thirteen locations, including six regional centres.

The initial Woodford Folk Festival groups provided the basis for a more structured interview guide for later focus groups. Nearly all groups contained regular performing arts attendees and most groups included mixed demographics and experiences. But a reasonable amount of homogeneity in background (not attitudes) within groups helped to foster discussion and make participants feel more comfortable about sharing their opinions with each other.

Some groups, however, were intentionally selected to bring together participants who could provide insights that might not be the focus of discussion in more diverse groups. For example, one group was conducted with young people in Blackall while another took place with young, Indigenous women living in suburban Brisbane.

Participants were recruited through several different sources to ensure as broad a spread as possible. Where participants were identified through organisational databases, telephone screening was conducted to select individuals who would fit the category, provide some diversity and were willing to participate. Nominal payments or tickets were offered as reimbursement for the costs associated with attendance.

Sample Focus Group Questions

Note: Questions varied depending on the location and experiences of the group.

- Could you describe a performing arts event that you've experienced where the place was memorable? (positive or negative)
- What sort of things have you seen here and do you think they suited the space?
- What other performing arts events do you go to? Are some more comfortable than others?
- Did the QMF event suit the venue? Why? Would it have worked or would you have seen it at a more conventional venue?
- How important are factors like transport, cost, other facilities?
- Is it important to see and hear everything or do other things like intimacy or other aspects of the performance enhance the experience more?
- Have you seen the same artists before in different venues? How did the experiences compare?
- Have any of the venues or festivals you've attended been suitable for children?

Appendix 7: Focus Group Responses: Emerging Themes

Most Focus Groups

Intimate environment	• possible in larger venues which have many small spaces; festivals; the Brisbane Powerhouse; not QPAC • suits theatre, popular music (e.g.Tivoli), cabaret (e.g. Spiegeltent), other small-scale performing arts • connects audience members to each other and performers • generally less formal, no need to dress up or be restrained • associated with lower cost and more frequent attendance
Larger formal venues	• more likely to be for large-scale and/or one-off events • also for ballet with large stage; and headline acts where people want to experience the event with a crowd • for some, dressing up is an enjoyable part of the experience, for others it's off-putting • for younger people (and people with children), not being able to move around or dance can be seen as a drawback
Outdoor spaces	• more comfortable for some — "can make space your own" • more affordable and able to take children • often, but not always, cheaper or free • can enhance experience — combination of environment and performance and bringing people together informally • sometimes perceive a performance in new way (e.g. performances in public places)
Community festivals	• reflect local identity, engage, bring communities together, especially in regional areas • allow city and regional audiences a chance to escape everyday life without loss of such amenities as parking, coffee, toilets and showers • multi-day events, especially where people camp together, extends experience, increases connection between audience/performers and can promote cultural exchange • all-age and camping events affect the atmosphere — more relaxed, less self-conscious and less stressful • involvement through volunteering, workshops, performing or living on site enhances experience • not universally popular — some people disliked sound spill, acoustics, heat, rain and other distractions
Major festivals	• memorable events respond to place, especially in regional areas where conventional venues may not be best option • workshops and local participation valued in regional areas
General comments	• audiences match expectations to venue (e.g. seeing something inexpensive/unfinished in a grungy laneway compared with an expensive event at the Opera House) • prefer animated venues with no "dead space" and places that stimulate the senses (outdoors, Powerhouse, places with smell of coffee, interesting space, exhibitions, etc) • having somewhere to discuss experience or sit and think about it alone (e.g. Powerhouse, community festivals) — extends experience, increases loyalty/attachment • audiences don't enjoy "being herded in and herded out" • performance and technical quality are the overriding factors for a small percentage of people • easy access affects frequency of attendance — even applies to Woodford which provides parking • big difference in access from inner Brisbane to adjacent suburbs • limited wheelchair accessibility except QPAC, Powerhouse

Regional Focus Groups

Local venues	• all except major centres have limited number of options, especially for large-scale performances Civic theatres: • often described as "generic" and having no atmosphere, especially by younger audiences • do provide venue for larger events but programming too mainstream by some, or only one-person touring shows • cannot/do not accommodate ballet/more expensive shows • often newer spaces have better acoustics and seating, including private school venues • usually too expensive for local performers to hire • seen as expensive, especially by young people and families, compared with cinema and free events like festivals and fetes Other venues: • often don't offer any place to gather before or after • strong attachment and ownership by young people when used for festivals, events and workshops (e.g. Old Memorial Hall in Blackall)
Regional Festivals	• seen as hugely important for bringing people together in a natural environment like Woodford, Yungaburra and Wallaby Creek • draws on community involvement in organisation and performance (especially in regional festivals)
Queensland Music Festival	• free events popular but seen as one-off spectacles • often uses spaces that are significant to local people and stimulate the senses and associations e.g. Cooktown Park or Blackall Woolscour, "everything that is important about Blackall and the West"
Outdoors Spaces	• hugely popular and seen point of difference to major cities; "country feel and open space" • some appreciated venues that also provide access to outdoors (e.g. Cooktown Powerhouse and Brisbane Powerhouse) • Weather an issue but providing some sort of shelter helps
Remoteness	• travelling in to town is an issue — time and weather dependent • enjoy going to see shows in major cities, especially events that may not be available elsewhere, such as live music for younger audiences, dance, classical music, musicals and theatre, but expensive

Young Indigenous Women Focus Group

QPAC	• group attended only rarely: Indigenous and/or free events • Being at an ACPA performance made one girl feel proud and although she loved the setting she found it intimidating • one other girl attended a Prom night with complimentary tickets, had never seen anything like it before, loved it.
NAIDOC	• All had attended in Brisbane and some had travelled elsewhere in Queensland or interstate. • Family-friendly, comfortable, free entertainment, cultural events, connection/long-standing association with venue • Enjoyed watching performances; "It's a family event — rides for the kids, stalls, sitting around yarning — that's where families normally get together". • "We feel comfortable at Musgrave, we feel safer because we own the park. Everyone feels free and like they are at home — can have a few drinks, get entertainment and the kids have a good day." • "Important to be free because not all Indigenous people are rich." • "Would never work elsewhere — it would be too crowded, some people wouldn't know what it was about and also tradition."
Other venues and events	**Boondall Entertainment Centre** • a few of the girls had been and liked the venue because of the featured artists but a long way to travel by public transport **The Dreaming** • being able to perform at opening ceremony "profound experience" • feel respect for the land and the elders • opportunities for learning from other Indigenous people and elders around camp fires **Stylin'UP** • fun, family day but "way different to The Dreaming" • no real attachment to place • social and chance for young people to perform **General** • food and drink expensive when you can't bring your own • relying on public transport very difficult with little kids especially travelling long distances in from suburbs

Appendix 8: Focus Group Responses - Themes by Location

Regional Focus Groups

Blackall: Woolscour	Mainly women in 30s or older and some older men
Queensland Music Festival	• machine music suited industrial space, wouldn't have worked in a conventional venue • Charleville show "embedded in place" • local involvement important
Q150 Shed	• size and shape enhanced feeling of intimacy • allowed movement inside/outside, especially for children • local involvement and "name" acts • free events encouraged attendance
Venues	• Civic centre touring product often only one person shows • Civic Centre too expensive for local performances • Isisford meaningful for local people, willing to travel 1hr
Remoteness	• people living outside town limited to week-end events • weather, esp. rain, may prevent people from travelling • some will travel to major cities for a show but expense matched by high expectations
Blackall: Old Memorial Hall	Younger men and women in late teens and 20s
Favourite non-local venues	Brisbane Powerhouse: • "alive and buzzing", "doesn't even feel like you're in Brissy" • always a lot of people around; different facilities in one Tivoli and Tanks: • intimate 'vibe' close to band and fewer people, "cool" Old Memorial Hall • strong attachment and ownership
Queensland Music Festival	• machine music 'designed to go there' • "everything Blackall's known for" • engaged other senses, e.g. staging at sunset, machine steam
Q150 Shed	• novelty, but hot in summer • offered workshops
Venues	• Civic Centre "there's no feeling in it", no-one hangs around after • people tend to go because of lack of choice but expensive • too expensive for locals to hire • pub has singer "maybe three times a year"
Remoteness	• Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne for bands but expensive • Boondall EC — mostly negative "too big", "no atmosphere"
Regional festivals & events	• bring people together, "celebrates who we are" • turn town into one big venue, entice people here • Shockwave — opportunity for young people to perform, learn and socialise

Outdoor spaces	• "Brisbane people can go to a festival indoors anytime but they can't come out here and watch a sunset and be involved" • "It's why we live here. It's why we decided to stay here, the open space."
Bundaberg:	Mixture of women and men from early 20s to 80s
Favourite venues	Brisbane Powerhouse: • Character, landscape and sense of history • more intimate atmosphere than a large empty space Cathedrals and churches: • atmosphere and acoustics adds to the experience Playhouse (local): • intimate; rounded; "people can almost touch the actors"
Venues	• intimacy more important for theatre, some music events • large-scale events need lots of people to create atmosphere • ballets cut-down for regional theatres or don't come at all • need somewhere you can sit and think about the experience, or even share it with others and the enjoyment goes on • some venues just herd people inside — cold, spartan, uninspiring • expensive to take a family to the theatre
Remoteness	• most people had attended other regional venues as well as those in other major Australian cities
Regional festivals & events	• reflect what town is about; brings communities together • like "kids and dogs and things going on all around" • not popular with people who find heat/noise distracting Woodford: • "love the workshops where you can create and not just observe"
Outdoor spaces	• "large venue would be good but choice important and wonderful outdoor spaces could be better utilised without spending money" • natural environment transforms the performance, makes it more open to everyone; not hidden away or seen as something pompous • you can make outdoors your own space — bring blankets, food and better for small children than seated venues
Cairns: Civic Theatre	Mixture of men and women from early 20s to 80s
Venues	• Civic Centre good size for ballet and some technical advantages but lacking in atmosphere • Newer, smaller venues can have better sound and production qualities; more intimate for some theatre and music events • Some like the formality and sense of occasion at Civic • Smaller venues less formal; "you can laugh as loud as you like" • Few venues offer places to gather and de-brief after event • Out of the way venues less enticing

Alternative venues	• for some "it doesn't matter if it's dirty and not purpose-built if it's cheap and you see something different" • "when you are in a place that's not finished, what you're seeing doesn't have to be finished" • encourages audience to talk about performance afterwards • need to know where/when performances will be • local churches for appropriate and community performances
Remoteness	• most people had attended other regional venues as well as those in other major Australian cities
Regional festivals & events	• Yungaburra festival "takes over town"; "village atmosphere" • good for some people with kids, others have too many commitments to spend days at a time
Outdoor spaces	• "Botanic gardens versatile and beautiful setting" for performances but weather shelter would extend use
Cairns: Arts Nexus	Mixture of men and women in 30s and 40s, mostly artists
Venues	Civic Centre: • suits ballet and choral society which both use whole stage • expect to see more conservative programming • too expensive for smaller (local) performances • feels generic — nothing really makes it feel like Cairns Smaller venues: • smaller, intimate feeling lends itself to interaction • intimacy important for some theatre, contemporary dance • seating arrangement can also encourage audience interaction Brisbane Powerhouse: • "some places are just destinations. You go [there] to see a show but you also just go there" General: • somewhere to converge extends the night before and after the performance — not just a show and you go home — chance for debriefing • front-of-house can affect whether people feel welcome and enjoy the experience
Alternative venues	• use of space that puts you off your guard appreciated by some
Remoteness	• most people had attended other regional venues as well as those in other major Australian cities
Regional festivals & events	• Yungaburra Festival very popular • Laura Festival has "metaphysical quality which changes the atmosphere" and wouldn't work elsewhere
Outdoor spaces	• spectacular settings memorable — often but not always outside • possible to create drama within natural environment (e.g. Karnak) • natural setting can heighten experience • great for families and community events

Children	• some people will take kids to events but worry about distracting others — some venues less formal and more child-friendly
Cooktown	Large group of mostly women but some men with mixed age range
Queensland Music Festival	• well-resourced which helped encourage community involvement • free events are a big attraction, especially for families • location significant — attractive and local gathering place — "it would've died a death in the Shire Hall" • one younger person thought the Musical Ship wasn't really useful beyond festival waste but people with kids disagreed
Regional festivals & events	Discovery Festival: • community-driven so time-consuming to organise • push to greater regulation and commercialisation with fewer local musicians participating (changing local identity) Wallaby Festival: • hugely popular, not crowded, beautiful surroundings, places to swim, family-oriented and run by volunteers • allows people to camp in same spot each year; brings people from different places together again each year • surroundings contribute to a relaxed vibe different from Discovery Festival • indigenous and non-indigenous cultural exchange — outdoors as a leveller Laura: • fewer people had attended but also great cultural experience
Outdoor spaces	• Cooktown rich in wonderful spaces but very few venues • "blending performance and natural environment can enrich experience" • Cooktown Powerhouse combines inside and outside so popular with those who enjoy being outside
Toowoomba	• Sense of "a night out at the Empire" is not necessarily related to choice of performance, but to foyer services • Strong sense of loyalty to venue, encouraged by management • Empire Auditorium adaptable for large or medium productions • Rehearsal 'black box' space more adaptable, and affordable • Church — flat space suited to some performances • Need for a dedicated drama theatre • Regional audiences will travel — the journey is part of the commitment. Attracts people from Brisbane
Woodford	Men and women from 20s to 50s, mostly volunteers

Woodford Festival	• "wouldn't work at South Bank" — more relaxed, away from the city and can drink wine/chai during performance • camping and living together engenders respect for environment and other people • all ages and casual dress code make it less stressful for some — city festivals too "cool" • evening performances outside in dark — "people can dance without feeling inhibited" • experience can be shared with others continually during the festival even watching others enjoy themselves enjoyable • volunteers makes it more welcoming for all and more affordable • different performances, exhibitions and workshops in different venues changes experience even within Woodford • feels safe and has a special children's festival • even if kids enjoy something they still like/need to move around • being outside heightens all the senses • connection with land and awareness of indigenous history • The Dreaming smaller and even more intimate
Other venues	QPAC: • some don't think the experience is worth the money or disliked the formality including dress code but others like dressing up • others don't like sitting still or sit on the aisle so they can dance • great for events like Bangarra and acoustics good Powerhouse: • small and groovy Entertainment Centre: • "no atmosphere"; cheaper tickets are towards the back Tivoli: • intimacy allows connection with performer, "not artificial" • Intimacy also more important for some theatre Riverstage, South Bank and other festivals: • free great things for kids General: • enjoy venues "where you can dance, move around, come and go" • "being able to have a drink afterwards — you want to hang on to the emotions as long as possible — you're not in and out — you can commune"

Brisbane Focus Groups

Brisbane Powerhouse	Mainly women and one man, all in their 30s and 40s, no kids
Favourite Venues	**Spiegeltent:** • intimate and ideally suited to cabaret type performances — beautiful structure and the décor all enhance performance • able to share a table and glass of wine with friends similar to the Judith Wright and the Brisbane Powerhouse **Boondall Entertainment Centre:** • devoid of atmosphere and everything so far away **Tivoli and other clubs in Fortitude Valley:** • great for bands **Powerhouse** • different spaces, performances and exhibitions — similar to festivals • easy to meet friends before or after performance or for one person just come and see what's on without booking
Venues	• intimacy important for some theatre, small-scale events • smaller space encourages interaction between performers and audience — creates spatial connection • some combination of food, wine and friends important for some but not all or for all events • QPAC and Powerhouse most wheelchair accessible to get to and see performances; access to transport makes a difference • QPAC for ballet but would like to see some events in the right outdoor setting • Dirty Apple at Powerhouse "more workshoppy, better in a recycled building" • different conventions for different venues even for same audience e.g. QPAC opera associated with a certain ceremony — dressing up — "it's not something you do every day"
Outdoor spaces	• blending performance and natural environment can make experience more affecting e.g. opera — "casualness infectious and more gusto rather than being so held back"
Judith Wright Centre	Mixture of women mainly over 30; one young woman

Venues	• intimacy — more important for some theatre and other events — feeling physically and emotionally close to performance, drawn into the experience because it's immediate • living close by encourages attendance and spontaneity — no parking problems for locals • those who live in suburbs or inner regional areas need to plan ahead and consider parking • those with children more likely to go now they have left home Spiegeltent: • "dazzling aesthetic and intimacy suits cabaret" QPAC: • "big ticket items" and big dance events but high expectations Boondall Entertainment Centre: • inaccessible, tickets and parking costly, no intimacy and hard to see Powerhouse: • different options — "no dead space", unlike QPAC
Alternative spaces	• associated with alternative, and often cheaper, experiences — willingness to take risks • Cirque de Soleil works in a temporary space that can accommodate performance; "magical white tent" • Judith Wright streetfront worked for Circa; "you could be close" • amateur theatre at local church halls as family outing
Regional festivals & events	• blending performance and natural environment enriches experience for some events • spectacular settings make performance more memorable Woodford: • "it's not like there's a parking lot and then there's a theatre" • performances linked to natural themes suit space • fun atmosphere — "so many people, everyone is sweaty, it's so much fun even though it's disgusting" (young woman) • "not my scene, people chopping the tops off coconuts and wandering around — too feral" (older man)
Outdoor spaces	• blending performance and natural environment enriches experience for some events e.g. Shakespeare in the Park • spectacular settings can make performance more memorable
Southside Education	Mostly young Indigenous young women from suburbs who had performed at The Dreaming and Stylin'UP (some with children)

Venues	**QPAC** • ACPA performance "I remember the floors carpeted and it was all beautiful. I was underdressed…It was so beautiful and lit up. When we went to take our seats, it was like rows and rows of chairs and you went up levels. It was awesome." "It suited the whole [thing] and a big crowd made you feel very proud, seeing all these things that we've had so many years mixed all inside, being out there, being told." • Another girl had complimentary tickets for a Proms performance: "I liked meeting up with friends and being able to see things you've never seen before and then come back and talk about it." **Boondall Entertainment Centre:** • Snoop Dog and Bonethump concert "it was pumping, I reckon it is a good venue, it was long way but I caught the train"
Cultural festivals & events	**NAIDOC (local, regional and interstate festivals):** • "you can watch performances and it's a family event — rides for the kids, stalls, sitting around yarning — that's where we normally meet our families and get together and have a good day" • "it's our park. We own Musgrave Park so we feel comfortable with what we are doing and where we are…we feel safer because we own the park, us indigenous, and what goes on in there is our thing — everyone feels free and like they are at home" • "would never work at another indoor venue — it would be too crowded with too many people, some people wouldn't even know what it was about and also tradition" • "important to have free event because not all indigenous people are rich" **White's Hill:** • family-oriented suburban sports day where "Indigenous get together, have a feed, watch people sing, dance…" **The Dreaming:** • involvement heightens experience "It was just deadly to be part of the opening ceremony" • culture and performance linked and "makes you feel more at home" "more like a tribal black fellow thing, they treat it like sacred land — there's a welcome by the elders" • longer festival allows interaction with performers and time to "learn new things about your own and other cultures — around the camp fire or workshops" • even if admission complimentary, food is expensive **Stylin'UP:** • "way different to The Dreaming but both awesome events" • "more social because you meet family you haven't seen for a long time" • "chance for young kids to get their voices heard" **Australia Day celebrations:** • "public transport limited and really difficult with little kids — we come to celebrate Australia Day together…but…it's hard getting there and getting home with kids for special days"

QPAC	All women in their early 30s or older, some with kids
Venue	**QPAC:** • Cremorne good because it's small — "you're closer together, hear other people's laughter, feeling of camaraderie" • intimacy important for some theatre and other smaller events, being close allows you to see facial expression • Playhouse suits ballet, not too far away and can see whole stage • one woman takes her young daughter to ballet but finds it expensive • Out of the Box excellent for children • Swiss-born woman wouldn't see opera in Brisbane, associates the artform with European culture and beautiful old buildings • social aspect not critical for all but heightens enjoyment especially if going with friends • need to book ahead, can't be spontaneous • easy to catch public transport or park • Thomas Dixon centre — well-designed seating and more casual **Brisbane Powerhouse:** • more child-friendly although Out of the Box is very good **Spiegeltent:** • "great atmosphere", "not concrete and steel", "more like circus" **Customs House:** • Good venue for classical music on week-ends
Outdoor spaces	• natural environment and performance created memorable experience for some regardless of acoustics • Woodford has community feel, variety, children's events • for others, conventional sets and venue more enjoyable

Appendix 9: Statistical Profile Table for all cultural events Queensland/not Queensland in 2002 and 2006

2002

Classical		Popular		Theatre		Dance		Musical		Other	
Qld	Not	Qld	Not	Qld	Not	Qld	Not	Qld	Not	Qld	Not
SEIFA Education Internet Age Sex Att Sport Employ Govt Supt	SEIFA Education Internet Age Sex Employ Govt Supt Health Contact Cntry Birth	Internet Sex Att Sport Region	SEIFA Education Internet Age Sex Att Sport Govt Supt Health Contact Cntry Birth	SEIFA Education Internet Sex Att Sport Employ Govt Supt Health	SEIFA Education Internet Age Sex Att Sport Employ Govt Supt Health Contact Cntry Birth	SEIFA Education Sex Att Sport Health	SEIFA Education Internet Sex Att Sport Health Contact Cntry Birth	SEIFA Internet Sex Att Sport Employ	SEIFA Education Internet Age Sex Att Sport Employ Govt Supt Health Contact Cntry Birth	Sex	Education Sex Att Sport Employ Cntry Birth
Emergency Volunteer Housing Family/HH St	Emergency Volunteer Family/HH St	Emergency Volunteer Housing Family/HH St	Emergency Volunteer Family/HH St	Emergency Volunteer Housing	Emergency Volunteer Family/HH St	Emergency Volunteer Family/HH St	Volunteer Family/HH St	Volunteer	Emergency Volunteer Housing Family/HH St	Volunteer	Emergency Volunteer
		Region	Marital St Region	Transport Hours Wk	Marital St Region	Hours Wk	Transport		Transport Marital St		
		Age 0.0569								Cntry Birth 0.064	SEIFA 0.054 Internet 0.06

Note: Independent variables considered to have a significant relationship with cultural event < 0.05. Independent variables where percentage is greater than but close to 0.05 are also included and the percentage is stated.

2006

Classical		Popular		Theatre		Dance		Musical		Other	
Qld	Not	Qld	Not	Qld	Not	Qld	Not	Qld	Not	Qld	Not
SEIFA Education Internet Age Att Sport Govt Supt	SEIFA Education Internet Age Sex Employ Govt Supt Health Cntry Birth	Education Att Sport	SEIFA Education Internet Age Sex Att Sport Employ Govt Supt Health Contact Cntry Birth	Education Sex Att Sport Govt Supt Contact	SEIFA Education Internet Age Sex Att Sport Employ Govt Supt Health Contact Cntry Birth	 Age Sex Att Sport Employ Cntry Birth	SEIFA Education Age Sex Att Sport Govt Supt Health Contact Cntry Birth	Education Sex Att Sport Employ	SEIFA Education Internet Age Sex Att Sport Employ Govt Supt Health Contact	Education Internet	SEIFA Education Internet Age Sex Att Sport Employ Govt Supt
Emergency Volunteer Housing Family/HH St	Emergency Volunteer Housing Family/HH St	Volunteer Family/HH St	Volunteer Family/HH St	Emergency Volunteer Family/HH St	Emergency Volunteer Family/HH St	Volunteer	Volunteer Family/HH St	Volunteer	Emergency Volunteer Housing Family/HH St	Volunteer	Volunteer Family/HH St
  Marital St	Hours Wk Region	 Social Grp	Hours Wk Marital St Region Social Grp		Transport Region Social Grp	 Social Grp	Transport Social Grp	 Social Grp	Hours Wk Region Social Grp	Hours Wk	
Employ 0.0645		SEIFA 0.0531 Contact 0.0566	Emergency 0.0528								Marital St 0.056

Note: Independent variables considered to have a significant relationship with cultural event < 0.05. Independent variables where percentage is greater than but close to 0.05 are also included and the percentage is stated.

Brisbane Powerhouse at dusk is by Jon Linkins, and was supplied to Redefining Places for Art by the Brisbane Powerhouse.

Redefining Places for *Art*

Exploring the dynamics of performance and location

Observing an apparent shift in the relationship between place and performance, *Redefining Places for Art* explores whether, how, why, and to what extent artists, administrators and audiences see place as an essential part of twenty-first century performance experience.

Using the vibrant and emerging cultural life of Queensland as its principle site of investigation, the project focuses on six clusters of arts organisations, from 'flagship companies' to small regional arts initiatives.

Between them, they represent a broad gamut of approaches: conventional theatre spaces, recommissioned industrial buildings, outdoor festivals, touring, and site-specific work.

Extensive interviews with artists and administrators and an analysis of print sources and statistical data are complemented by focus group discussions with audience members throughout the State.

This provides revealing insights into drivers and obstacles for striking a creative balance between place and performance, between tradition and innovation.

Important outcomes include an awareness of increasing desire among audiences to curate their own experiences, the search among artists and administrators to negotiate between production values and flexibility, and the realisation that arts policies and funding may not yet fully reflect the current dynamic relationship between place and performance.

Redefining Places for Art was realised as an ARC Linkage project in collaboration with the University of Canberra, Arts Queensland, and The Australia Council for the Arts.

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